MAKING SENSE OF STORIES

September, 2004

by

Simon Rose

MAKING SENSE OF STORIES

by

Simon Francis Rose

B. Sc. (Hons) Syd; B.A. (Hons) Deakin; Ass. Dip. (Ceramics) ANU

A thesis submitted for the degree of

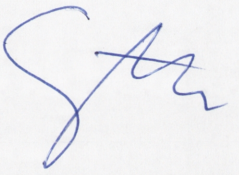
Doctor of Philosophy

Australian National University

Canberra

September, 2004

The following thesis is my own work



Simon Francis Rose

... tout homme est suspendu aux récits, aux romans, qui lui révèlent la vérité multiple de la vie. Seuls ces récits ... le situent devant le destin. Nous devons donc chercher passionnément ce que peuvent être des récits.[1]

---

1 Georges Bataille, *Le Bleu du Ciel*, Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1963, Preface, p. 7.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is about reading. It asks the question: how is it that stories can make sense? This question, like so many questions in philosophy, seems unproblematic at first blush. But the more one thinks about the problem, the more mysterious do stories become. A fictional story is about no one and nothing. Yet, we become excited when we attend the playhouse or the cinema. We become anxious about the fate of the heroine in a story. We can't put a book down. We may become so involved in the action and so involved with the characters, that we exhibit emotional reactions like those we exhibit in the presence of real events and persons. We may react even more strongly to a story than we do to an event in the world. How can this be?

This thesis takes a common *façon de parler*, the idea that a story makes a world, and uses it to construct a theory of how stories can function. We make worlds from stories when we interpret what we read. I will call a world so-made, a story-world. This thesis argues that this simple idea can show how stories make sense: how they can be understood by a reader and why we react to them as we do.

We can understand Aristotle's claim that a story is mimetic, by treating mimesis under the rubric of representation. A story represents a story-world. There may be many possible, different story-worlds able to be made from a particular text. A brief consideration of a story such as *The Turn of the Screw*, demonstrates this.

But, if reading a story causes us to make a story-world, then experiencing the "real" world also causes us to make a world within which that experience is located. That is to say, we describe and, thus, fashion the world in which we live;

I call a world so made an actual world. We make our actual world by symbolising, usually in words or language. We make both kinds of worlds, story or actual, through imagination. Story-worlds are things we can "observe" but we do not live in them and we cannot alter them; we do live in our actual world and, within strict limits, we can change it. Therefore, story-worlds and actual worlds are different; yet they have much in common. That is why we react to stories in ways that are like the ways we react to real-world situations. This is why we can talk about stories and their characters in ways that are like the ways we talk about our world.

Yet, stories go beyond a few tears or some excitement. They can, it is often claimed, teach us things. I argue that story-worlds (can) operate as metaphors for actual worlds. We (can) see our actual world in metaphoric terms, terms dictated, or suggested, by the story-world. Metaphor is a pervasive feature of language. It is not restricted to single words or phrases but metaphor, as a linguistic device, extends to take in whole discourses, including stories.

In developing its argument, the thesis considers several stories, including some drawn from popular genres, to show how the thesis can account for the claims made for them. We can see why we react as we do, and why stories can be enjoyed, appreciated and learned from. This thesis claims to provide good answers to these questions; this is why the thesis should be taken seriously.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

I have long considered reading to be an important pastime (if "important" and "pastime" are not mutually exclusive terms) and, from as early as I can remember, have been a reader. I have always preferred those works usually described as "classics" to most others. My experience is hardly unique. It was only natural that, when offered an opportunity to conduct some extended work in a field of philosophical study, I would choose something associated with reading and with reading fiction in particular. As a dedicated reader, but a poor writer, the emphasis of this thesis falls on the reader.

One could say that the philosophy of the last century has been preoccupied with the attempt to understand how language, ordinary language that is, works. Progress in our understanding of the mysteries of language has been made, but it could not be said that the problems have been solved and there are still many competing theories and different ways of analysing this problem. Aesthetics has, however, for some time now, been unfashionable.

This thesis falls into the gap between aesthetics and language. It is my belief that we will learn more about the way that language works by studying complex usages than we will ever learn by worrying about the difficulties of "snow is white". Stories are an example of a complex use of language to create something new. I believe that a clear understanding of how stories can have meaning should throw

considerable light on the general problem of meaning as well as progress our understanding of a number of aesthetic questions. These are my hopes for the longer-term prospects of work, which can only be commenced here. We will have to content ourselves now with more modest outcomes than those just suggested. But an understanding of how stories can have meaning is a start and I submit this thesis as a contribution to the study of how language works and how the language of stories, in particular, functions to weave its magic.

Like most philosophical questions, stories seem unproblematic at first glance. Yet, the more they are considered, the more mysterious they become. We become very worked up over them. We talk about popular or well-known fictional characters in the same terms as we talk of people we have met and know. We talk about Harry Potter or Anna Karenina and no one is confused. Harry Potter and his concerns seem to be of more significance to many than the fates of whole countries. Yet neither Harry Potter nor Anna Karenina exists or ever existed; they are, as characters appearing in fictional stories, "made up". Why waste our time with such things? Yet we do "waste" our time on stories; some of us "waste" a great deal of time, even whole careers, on them.

Many of us are convinced that stories are an essential human artefact. Many of us are convinced that a Shakespearean play can do more than just divert us and entertain us for a brief period. Why would we endure the stress and pain of a play such as *King Lear* unless we believe that it has some value for us?

This thesis sets out to consider these, and similar, questions and to provide answers that are a step further along the path to understanding how these artefacts work and why they are important.

The major questions that this thesis asks are: how do stories work and why should they work at all? In our case, we are asking how they work when they are read, rather than what authors do to write stories in the first place. In large measure, thus, this thesis takes stories as given. Neither is this primarily an aesthetic study

into why we consider some works great or beautiful. I will introduce some material towards the end of the thesis, to show how some works can have a meaning that, seemingly, transcends the story. This thesis, thus, falls into the domain of hermeneutics as well as into the domains of language and knowledge.

It should be clear that I consider that this thesis falls into the general discipline of philosophy rather than of literature. Although I use a number of literary examples (novels, both "good" and "bad") in the discussion, I make no claims to be a literary analyst. My literary examples are just that: examples designed to put flesh on the underlying philosophical theory. The work should be judged on that theory, rather than the many limitations in my expounding of literary theory or my comments on the works of literature that I use as examples.

To conclude this preface there are two things to be said. The first is a note on quotations. As a general rule I have removed emphases from all quotations reproduced in this text, to prevent unwanted emphasis distracting from the flow of the argument. On those few occasions where I have left the author's emphasis in the quotation, I have noted the fact.

The second is to thank people. I will start by taking the opportunity to thank a number of people at the Australian National University. I would like to thank Paul Thom, Udo Thiel and Brian Garrett who have taken turns to supervise the work, the task of oversighting the finishing of this work, falling to Brian. I would also like to thank my advisors: Simon Haynes, Livio Dobrez, Jeremy Shearmur and Richard Campbell for their many suggestions and assistance. I would particularly like to acknowledge the assistance of Simon who got me over a number of rocky patches and of Livio who introduced me to the hermeneutists discussed in my conclusion and gave me a great deal of assistance in coming to grips with their work. Richard made a great many helpful comments, detailed as well as general. Elizabeth Minchin, of the classics department, has assisted me considerably with an understanding of some of the Greek terms important to the

thesis. Thomas Mautner has been of great assistance with the many drafting issues that one confronts when undertaking a work of this kind. The philosophy department at the Australian National University has been a good home to me over the several years required to carry out this work. The time spent on this study has been made very pleasant by the good grace and friendship of many members of the university staff, both academic and administrative, as well as the other students. Many hours are spent in discussions with others (and particularly with other post graduate students). I would like to thank all these people for their opinions, advice and forbearance.

I would also like to thank my many friends for their support and encouragement. In particular, I would like to thank Clive Monty and Helen Yapp, who generously used their time to read and comment on a final draft of the thesis. Without their advice the text would be much less satisfactory.

Perhaps the greatest load in the development of a project such as this falls on the long-suffering family of the student. I strongly suspect that my wife, Robyn, and daughter, Heloise, would have resisted my embarking on this project had they known what it would entail. Fortunately, they did not and neither did I. I would like to publicly thank them for their endurance and forbearance as well as for the multitude of small tasks that they carried out. These range from making coffee through to being harangued on various topics associated with the work as well as listening to the text of the work at various stages of its development and to the making of many valuable suggestions.

Of course, valuable as all this assistance is, it can never prevent the obdurate from making errors and any such are, of course, my own misdoing.

INTRODUCTION

Is there a problem with stories?

It is well known that Jeremy Bentham considered fictional stories to be a waste of time. John Stuart Mill reports him as thinking that in poetry "[w]ords ... [are] perverted from their proper office [because they are] employed in uttering anything but precise logical truth."[2] Mill, further, reports Bentham as saying that "'[a]ll poetry is misrepresentation.'"[3] Plato's relationship with stories is ambiguous, but, in some dialogues, he seems to agree with Bentham. For example, in *The Republic*, he tells us that stories are merely false and to be contrasted with the truth, which is to be valued highly.[4] He certainly considers many stories to be unsuitable for the education of the young (or any one else).[5]

A fictional story is about no one and nothing; it is "made up". A story concerns the doings of people or creatures that do not exist and, in some cases, could not exist. So, is Bentham correct? Should we agree with Plato? Do we waste our time and effort on them? Are they merely lies?

---

2 J. S. Mill, "Bentham", in J. S. Mill and Jeremy Bentham (ed. Alan Ryan), *Utilitarianism and Other Essays*, 1987, p. 173.

3 Ibid., p. 174.

4 Plato, *The Republic*, (transl. Desmond Lee), London: Penguin Books, 1987, 389b.

5 Ibid., 386-398.

There are a small number of people, like Bentham, who are not interested in stories. But most people treat them with great seriousness and do not see them as meaningless. People encounter stories almost every day and care about them deeply. It takes a lot of time to read a long novel. Many of the world's great religions are based on stories (the stories of Jesus and the doings of the Hindu gods for example). People follow television programmes avidly, attend the cinema and playhouse, and read books. No one likes to have a story cut off part way through. We resent it if the last page of the book is missing or the telephone rings near the end of a television programme.

We all know that the story is made up. We all know that, in essence, Bentham is correct: stories are a "misrepresentation". Nevertheless, we get excited when we go to a horror film (we may even scream). We are sorry for Anna Karenina (we may even cry). We read desperately onward, to see what will happen. Why do we care, and care so passionately? For Bentham, such behaviour is absurd and irrational.

Yet, as I have just said, we do care. How is that possible? Are we being tricked by a perverted misrepresentation? Are stories merely an idle waste of time and should be eschewed by rational minds. How can they mean anything at all or make any sense? There are no fairies or gnomes or such like creatures. King Lear never existed and many of us do not believe that there is a hell or a purgatory like those described by Dante. So why read about such things?

I have already suggested that there must be good reasons why we enjoy stories. I take it as given that stories are important human artefacts and that they considerably enrich our lives. It seems that stories are a fundamental part of what it is to be human. I take it that, at the very least, stories do make sense and that we are not engaged in a fool's task when we read and enjoy them. I take it, therefore, that there must be an answer to this puzzle. The purpose of this thesis is to

enquire into that puzzle. How do stories function? Why do we care? How can they make sense? Can we learn anything from them and, if so, how?

It is not, of course, possible to say all there is to say about stories (or any other thing) in a thesis such as this. It is necessary to draw a boundary around the inquiry. We will limit our inquiry to a consideration of how stories function; how they function to make their magic. How can they make sense at all? Why do we react so strongly to stories and the characters in them? From there, it will be possible to consider stories as metaphors in an attempt to explain why they matter; how they tell us new things; how they produce their unique knowledge. But that is as far as we will be able to go. The thesis asks why do readers react as they do and how can we learn from stories. These questions are questions about readers (rather than authors). Consequently, the thesis is readercentric. It will rarely consider the creative act of the author.

Studies into stories have not been at the forefront of philosophical work in the twentieth century, but there are signs that stories are now receiving more attention than they have in the past. There are some interesting answers to the questions posed and some "near misses". The answers provided to date fail, in my opinion, to explain fully the phenomena under investigation. In this thesis, I propose a new approach to the question. I will take the familiar concept of the story as making a world and attempt to turn a literary *façon de parler*, into a philosophically respectable theory. The idea of fictional worlds or story-worlds, as I will call them, is seen by some as already discredited. Gregory Currie goes so far as to call fictional worlds "despised".[6] Perhaps he has a point. He refers to Pavel's discussion[7] which he calls "unilluminating".[8] Certainly Pavel's discussion is

---

6 Gregory Currie, *The Nature of Fiction,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 62.

7 Thomas G. Pavel, *Fictional Worlds*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

8 Currie, *The Nature of Fiction*, p. 56, and also footnote 6.

vague. Nevertheless, the idea of a story-world is still immensely appealing and I am hoping that this thesis will go some way towards restoring faith in such constructs by casting a stronger light onto them. I will argue that stories, or story-texts, represent a world, what I will call a story-world. When we read the story, we make that world, or, rather, a version of that world. I will, further, argue that we do something similar when we learn about this world (what I will call simply "the world").

The argument I will put sees very great similarities between stories and "reality". I will argue that the way we talk about stories and the way we talk about the world are similar. There is no great gulf between scientific and literary discourse. I will talk about literary discourse without implying any value judgment about the work in question. Any story, no matter how banal, is "literary" in the sense in which I will use the term. I will also use the term "art" in a similarly inclusive sense.

-0-

It is usual, in an introduction, to outline the argument being put forward and to draw a boundary around the discussion to clearly identify what is to be covered (and why) and what will not be discussed (and why not). I will now proceed to do those things, taking the second of them first.

There is a certain psychology in reading stories. Why did Bentham consider them a waste of time, while most people enjoy them? Mill said that music was Bentham's "favourite amusement" and that he liked painting, sculpture and the

other arts.[9] It is unusual for someone to like these arts and, yet, find stories a waste of time. We might want to enquire into the psychology of Bentham's unusual attitudes. Why do you laugh at a story, while I cry at the same story? These questions are questions about the psychology of individuals and of human beings and are well outside the scope of this enquiry.

Neither is this an aesthetic enquiry. By aesthetics I mean the philosophy of beauty and taste. Why do we consider some things to be beautiful? Why do some people find certain things beautiful while others do not? Is there some standard of beauty? These, and many others, are questions that are, largely, outside the scope of this work. I will not ask why some stories are well written (or what it is for a story to be well written) and some poorly. I will, briefly, need to consider the question of style because of the way it affects how we interpret a work.

This thesis is concerned with story content rather than any "poetic" values a story may have or may be said to have. A poem, such as Matthew Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*, can be analysed as poetry or (these are hardly exclusive) as a story. An analysis of the poem as a poem would concentrate on things such as its use of assonance, repetition of words and similar matters. To concentrate on the story is to analyse the plot and the way it develops. It is the latter that is our current concern. There can be no doubt, however, that the effect of a work like *Sohrab and Rustum* depends in large part on the poetic nature of the whole work. It is clear, to follow through with this example, that the pathos of the story is built by Arnold's use of poetic devices. Some features of the work, surely, count towards both: the way Arnold describes the scenes and the battles, the dream like qualities of much of the language contribute towards the way the plot develops and also towards the poetic effects. The poem borders on the maudlin but, I think, just escapes that because of Arnold's skill as a poet and his use of such devices. Presented as a "straight" story, I think this work would fail where, as a poem, it succeeds. Clearly, style does make a significant contribution to a story.

---

9 J. S. Mill, "Bentham", p. 173.

If *Sohrab and Rustum* is a story, which clearly it is, then what is the story content of a poem such as Keats' *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* or Wordsworth's *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*? Any story content would be slight in the case of the Keats' poem and very slight in the case of the Wordsworth (*I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* does have a story line, although thin). Yet many people think that these two poems, certainly *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, are better poems than *Sohrab and Rustum*. If this is so, it is some "poetic" quality that is the differentiating factor. We do some sort of violence to a work when we carve it up and describe it as "poetry" or "story" or analyse it under these different heads.

We will consider, briefly, the question of style. It is clear that the style of writing of a story can make all the difference to a story, raising it from the banal to the great (that has just been observed). However, we will only be concerned to note the way the style of a work influences the way we treat the story; we will not be considering style as a pointer to either "good" or "bad" writing. Our purpose will be limited to the recognition that style makes a considerable contribution to a work and the way it will probably be understood.

As already indicated, we will avoid the standard questions of aesthetics as not germane to our discussion. There will be no definitions of art or of literature. Many people consider that some stories are literature (or art) and that others are not. That may be so, but I will ignore such distinctions. Some stories "work" better than others and some stories are powerfully effective where others are not. Some stand the test of time, while others are ephemeral. These are questions that I will not address directly, although the thesis might shed some light on questions such as these. The thesis must account for any story and, therefore, I will need to define a story.

That is easily done. I will define a story as something with a plot: a plot is a sequence of events (not necessarily told in chronological order but, by implication, at least, occurring in some order). A story is, thus, a narrative. In a story, time

passes. I will refer to stories as "stories" rather than as "narratives". This definition will allow almost anything to be treated as a story, provided it meets the simple requirement. Plays, novels, poems may all be stories. A plot may be simple and the story may concentrate on characters and their development or even on place. A simple description of something, however, is not a story unless it supposes a succession of events. A collection of impressions or ideas is not a story. A character description alone is not a story unless something happens to cause that character to develop or change in some way or unless a plot unfolds to reveal things about a character. However, a story such as Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* is a story; time passes while people wait for something to happen. It is the passage of time and the failure of Godot to arrive which, in this case, constitute the plot in the terms I am using. A story written using the "flashback" method is a story, for there is an implied sequence of events. Sometimes it may be very difficult to recover the sequence of events but that is a problem of interpretation. Time is, thus, an essential element in a story.

We should notice that this definition covers any story and not just fictional stories. The definition offered covers fiction but also covers stories of other kinds (for example: history or gossip). We are not yet in a position to offer a definition of "fiction". That will become possible when the thesis has developed its material further and, so, we will need to visit this question again later.

The definition given above is very like Aristotle's famous definition of a story as something with a beginning, a middle and an end.[10] The plot, Aristotle claimed, is "what tragedy is there for and that is the most important thing of all."[11] However, as I have said, I will accept something with a minimal plot or something that concentrates on character or place as a story, provided there is an (implied) chronology in the writing. Where Aristotle's definition emphasises plot (at the

---

10 Aristotle, *Poetics* (transl. Malcolm Heath), London: Penguin Books, 1996, 1450b.

11 Ibid., 1450a.

expense of character or place) the definition provided here is inclusive allowing a far wider scope to the idea of story. A story is constructed from words, which may be spoken or written. I will talk of the writer and the reader and the text, although there are obvious correlates to the speaker, hearer and telling or to television and film or to a play. My thesis covers stories in any of these forms but I will use writer/reader terminology for convenience. We have already noted that there are elements in any text that are not, strictly, "the story" as we have defined it. Such elements are descriptions and stylistic devices and so forth; in a spoken text, these include the speaker's intonation and other verbal clues. These elements are an integral part of any text and we will find that they affect how we understand the story. No text can consist of nothing but a plot; there will always be such components.

I will use examples (painting in particular) drawn from art forms other than story, to illustrate some points, but my thesis is about stories and I will not develop a general theory about such art forms. The use of illustrations drawn from these arts is intended only to illuminate the thesis and make it clearer.

There are (at least) two ways of seeing a story: the author's and the reader's. A discussion of story must take one point of view or the other; to take both points of view into account would be a very large task. My major orientation will be, as has already been said, that of the reader. This is an important constraint on the work. We will not be looking at the question of writing and the creativity of authors, novelists, playwrights or other artists.

There are many theories of fiction or of art, which are based around the author and what she does when she writes. Some of these revolve around the question of authorial intention. In this line of thinking is Searle's speech act theory: a story is fictional if the author makes a certain kind of speech act, otherwise it is not.[12]

---

12 John Searle, "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse", in Peter Lamarque, *Philosophy and Fiction*, 1983, pp. 320-327.

Currie's theory of art takes a similar approach, centring the question of fiction in authorial intentions.[13] Art arises from the action of the artist, according to such theories. These theories are taking a different approach to stories from that taken here. Some may be incompatible with the claims made in this thesis but many are quite compatible. Further, such approaches are concerned, from the start, with identifying fiction and non-fiction; this is Searle's and Currie's concern. This thesis will need to approach this question, but it is not of immediate importance to our purpose.

This thesis, as already said, asks why the reader becomes emotionally involved; why readers can talk about stories and characters in them. The thesis will usually avoid questions such as those about authors; sometimes, however, an abbreviated discussion will be unavoidable. This is not to say that the author is unimportant; that is obviously not so. With no author, there would be no story. Suffice it to say here, that I consider some writers to be extraordinarily creative people. But, we will be looking at the creative task (and it will turn out to be a very creative task) of reading, understanding (and responding to) a story. The questions we are asking concern the reader, rather than the writer, and the way the reader responds to a story.

The other thing an introduction should do is to introduce and summarise the argument.

This thesis presented here is very simple. I argue that, when we read a story we make a world, a story-world, in which the characters dwell and the action occurs. Our definition of a story implies that, in a story-world, there will be events and time. That is not to suggest that we cannot (or do not) make worlds where there are no events or time (a painting may be an example where a world is static). Such possibilities are, in general terms, outside the scope of this thesis.

---

13 Currie, *The Nature of Fiction.*

I will commence my argument by taking up the Aristotelian idea of mimesis. I will argue that a story is, as Aristotle argued, mimetic. A bare claim like that would beg the question. It is essential in order to sustain such an argument, to show what "mimesis" means. I will argue that mimesis is representation. A story, that is, a text, represents the characters, the locations and the actions depicted, which is to say, a story-world. The characters exist within, and the events take place in, the story-world. When we read a text (which is presented to us in a symbolic form) we construct those things from the textual representation. What we construct is what I am calling a story-world. A story-world is, clearly, an intentional object made by the reader.[14] On this argument, a mimesis is a representation of the story-world and that story-world is the totality of what the story describes or tells us about. The characters are denizens of the story-world, which is the locus of the action. The time in the story passes in the story-world and it may, almost certainly will, pass at a different "rate" from time in our world. We can already see that description of places, such as those in *Sohrab and Rustum*, contribute to the story-world, for they describe its geography and so forth.

A very clear example of this claim is to argue that, say, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, represents a world, the Divine Comedy story-world. The major action (Dante's journey through hell, purgatory and heaven), plus the minor actions (the various conversations and punishments) take place in the Divine Comedy story-world. The characters (those in hell, Dante, Virgil, Beatrice and so forth) all inhabit the Divine Comedy story-world. The world of Dante's story is, supposedly, no less than the realm of the dead. How we take this world (in terms of our world) is a matter for further discussion. We may take it that hell is very like Dante's description or we may take hell to be very different from that (or non-existent). But to understand the *Divine Comedy*, at least in the first instance, is to make a Divine Comedy story-world, and to do that is to interpret the text.

---

[14] Any involvement of authors with story-worlds is a different question.

It follows from this example, that the story-world is self-contained. Any overflow from that world to this (and there is, of course, such an overflow) is to do with how we see this world and that is a separate topic, but one we will cover late in the thesis. The making of the story-world requires the placing of events and objects (including characters) within that world.

The thesis then argues that, in like manner, we make the real world (what I call an actual world) by symbolising it. We experience the world (that is, whatever it is that we experience) and we make sense of that experience by symbolising our experience as a world. I call a world so made an actual world. It is also clear that an actual world is an intentional object. No two actual worlds are identical. That is to say that my actual world (how I make the world) is slightly different from your actual world (how you make the world). Of course, our worlds have a lot in common. Were it not so, we would not be able to communicate.

I will further claim that there are many ways we might make an actual world from our experience. There are, thus, many actual worlds all of them acceptable, which is to say workable, versions of what there is. I will call such a world, "right". I will talk of right worlds rather than "true" or "correct" worlds, for many worlds can be right, but only one, if any, could be "true". Not just any world, however, is right. A world that will not allow us to prosper (or even survive) is wrong, for it is not workable. This thesis owes much to Nelson Goodman and his approach to worldmaking. Yet, Goodman, who was a logician at heart, argued that a world must be completely consistent. It is probably impossible to make a world that is completely consistent. I will, therefore, allow some, undefinable, level of inconsistency into an actual world and also into a story-world.

Just as we can make many versions of the world (to make a multiplicity of actual worlds), it is possible to (legitimately) interpret a text in many ways. Right ways are in harmony with the text and wrong ways do violence to it.

I will then look at imagination as the way we make worlds. I will argue that the making of worlds, both story-worlds and actual worlds, is an exercise of that creative ability we call "imagination". I will argue, with Kant, that imagination is a pervasive synthesising capability that we have. Those writers, Sartre for example, who see imagination as less than pervasive, I will argue, are restricting the operation of imagination arbitrarily.

We will readily see why we can talk about stories and why we react to them as we do. That discussion will tell us nothing about why it might be valuable to read stories or how stories can affect our lives. We will see why stories make sense but we need to shed some light on how (or if) stories are able to teach us anything. Many readers, myself included, maintain that stories are able to do this. For many readers that is why some stories are great. I do not wish to become sidetracked into questions of greatness but I do wish to suggest how a story might teach us things.

To argue that, I will turn to the writings of Paul Ricoeur on metaphor. I will argue that metaphor is a pervasive linguistic device extending from very simple metaphors to extraordinarily complex ones. Some metaphors are merely trite, but some metaphors can shed great light on how things are. I will argue that (some) stories present us with complex metaphors for how this world is. This will show how stories (through the operation of metaphor) can create new knowledge. That will conclude my main argument. Aristotle insisted that one of the major benefits of the tragedy was that we learned from the experience. He also argued that metaphor is a wonderful stylistic device. Our argument takes this idea, with Paul Ricoeur, to a higher level. Thus, the argument presented here starts and ends with Aristotle taking an excursion through some other ideas to end where it started, with Aristotle and *The Poetics*. This argument might leave the door open for others to pursue questions of value, but, as said, I will avoid that debate. I will, to conclude, illustrate the thesis in action via a brief excursus through some popular and serious works. That will bring my main argument to a close.

In my conclusion, I will briefly consider other approaches to stories as worldmakers, particularly that of Roman Ingarden. I will then consider the hermeneutic tradition, particularly as exemplified by Gadamer. I will show how that work dovetails with this to provide a powerful way of understanding stories. It will be apparent that the thesis developed here, by way of Aristotle and Goodman, is very sympathetic to that developed by the hermeneutic tradition.

In terms of the layout of the work, the argument proceeds by way of a consideration of mimesis (chapter 1), which, I argue, is best thought of as representation. Chapter 2 considers the matter of interpretation of stories. I continue with an analysis, largely favourable, of Nelson Goodman's approach to worldmaking (chapter 3) and an analysis of our worldmaking capability, which, I will argue, is an imaginative one (chapter 5). In chapter 4, I draw out the consequences of the comparison implied by chapters 1 and 3. The penultimate chapter (chapter 6) provides a discussion of metaphor and the final chapter (chapter 7) provides a case study. The thesis concludes with a brief discussion of, and comparison with, the hermeneutic tradition.

We will see that there is much common ground between the ways we make actual worlds and story-worlds. There is a temptation to multiply similarities between the two activities. There are many. There is a sense in which to do that would strengthen the thesis; yet, to do that would be merely tedious. I will identify certain similarities where they are important to the overall argument, but I will try to resist the temptation to multiply similarities unnecessarily. Any reader, who accepts the thesis being argued, will easily multiply similarities for him or herself, if so inclined.

I think that this thesis is simple and elegant and answers many questions left unanswered by other approaches to stories. That is its strength. My claim is that the thesis put forward here allows us to see stories in a light that concurs with commonsense. It explains how we can talk about stories as we do and why we

have (real) emotional reactions to them; it does these without recourse to devices such as pseudo-emotions. As well as making sense, stories (or, at least, some stories) will turn out to be powerful metaphors for how things are. This is what we expect and this is the claim that the thesis makes on its own behalf.

This thesis is avowedly relativist. I will, therefore, need to consider the question of relativism and absolutism; I do that in chapter 3 towards the end of my discussion on the making of actual worlds. There, I will also consider just how strong a relativist position the thesis requires. However, here, I want to say just a little about the nature of philosophising, and the sorts of arguments that we can expect to carry weight in support of this, or any other, thesis.

There was a time when philosophers expected to be able to produce knock down arguments to disprove their opponents' cases and they sought similar arguments to prove their own cases. It was believed that such proofs are possible. Plato, thought, for example, that he had proven Protagoras wrong once and for all. There was the expectation that a single, universal philosophical theory would (eventually) be proven to be the Truth. Fortunately, for philosophers, this project has not succeeded, and is unlikely ever to do so, for its success would lead to the demise of philosophy. Even worse, it would lead to a situation where we would no longer need to ask basic questions about how things are. I believe that it is the discussion of philosophical questions is more important than the results of those discussions. Philosophers speak for and, sometimes, challenge the beliefs and actions of their age. They show how the age understands the world and why it sees the world the way it does. Philosophers may provide a critique of the fashionable beliefs of a time and point towards new ways of seeing things.

Thus, Thomas Aquinas reflected his age and its concerns and, at a philosophical level, its beliefs about the world. As we come to understand the world in new (more appropriate for us, but not necessarily better or more correct) ways, so new approaches need to be developed. Most of us, while admiring the work of St

Thomas, do not now accept his philosophy. It has become, as eventually any philosophy must, outmoded.

We can, I claim, no longer expect to provide a deductive proof of how things are (if, indeed, they are any particular way). I will argue, in chapter 3, that things are not any given way, but that we human beings determine, in a dialectical manner, how things are. That is not to say that philosophical writing can be without argument; it cannot. We can no longer ask of any thesis that it prove its case with mathematical rigour. It is to say that the test of a thesis is what that thesis says, how it says it and how well it (seems to) explains the phenomena under investigation. I claim that the ideas put forward here do just that; I claim that the thesis developed here explains why and how we respond to stories as we do; why Bentham was wrong to pay them such scant regard. I think the claims I am making satisfy our beliefs about the world (for example, that we experience real emotions, and not some sort of pseudo-emotions, in the presence of the tragedy of *King Lear*). My claim is simply that the findings of this thesis provide better and more complete answers to some of the mysteries of stories than do alternative proposals. I cannot and will not provide knock down arguments for or against my case or those of others. I, further, claim that this account is simple and elegant and, generally, gives credence to the way we do in fact react to and understand stories and it does so without recourse to artificial notions such as pseudo-emotions.

To concede this much is to admit that the thesis put forward here, falls under the hammer of its own claims. I have indicated that it will be necessary to consider relativism and the classic arguments against it. I will suggest that those arguments are not persuasive and that relativist theses must be considered as possible ways of explaining phenomena. Relativist theses must, however, always leave the door open to competing claims. We all must accept that. As already suggested, that merely keeps the discussion alive and is, therefore, an outcome to be welcomed.

CHAPTER 1

Story-Worlds

Mimesis as Representation

There have been stories as long as there have been human beings. Stories have existed to entertain as well as to tell us about our past. Stories have been used to explain why things are the way they are and to justify that way. The Biblical stories of western Christendom are a good example of this. There have been stories of gods and of men and of lesser beings. It is natural that philosophers started to wonder how stories function from the very beginning of philosophical speculation. The earliest theory that we have on the matter dates from the time of Plato and Aristotle, but there is little doubt that their theory was, at least in part, already extant by the time they adopted it. This is the idea that stories are mimetic.

The support of names as illustrious as Plato and Aristotle established the thesis that stories are mimetic as the standard theory about the operation of stories for centuries. However, lately, the theory of mimesis has fallen into disrepute. Stephen Halliwell suggests that this is not so much because of difficulties with Aristotle's theory but, rather, with the "adaptation and misinterpretation"[15] to

---

15 Stephen Halliwell, "Aristotelian Mimesis Revisited", in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 28, (1990), p. 487.

which the theory has been subjected. Any theory of such long-standing currency can be, and probably will be, modified and then misunderstood. Having been transmogrified, the theory can be rejected.

I want, here, to reconsider mimesis as a way of understanding stories. To do that, I want to go back to the writings of Aristotle and to consider what he meant by "mimesis". However, we will not stop in the Greece of Aristotle's day, for we need a theory which will accommodate not only the sorts of stories that Aristotle was accustomed to, but any story, including the modern novel. My purpose in this chapter is to gain a clear understanding of Aristotle's approach to stories and adapt that approach to accommodate, not only works such as Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, but also works such as Kafka's *Metamorphosis*.

I want to argue that stories are, indeed, mimetic but that mimesis is best understood under the general notion of "representation" rather than, as has become customary, under the idea of "copy" or "imitation". Stories, I will argue, represent something. That something, I will further argue, is a world; the world of the story or, as I will call it, a story-world. It will be clear fairly early in the discussion what I do not mean by "representation", but it will not become apparent what the term does mean until the argument has progressed some way. To assist us to come to grips with the writings of Aristotle, we will rely heavily on the writings of the scholars Stephen Halliwell and Leon Golden.

In *The Republic*, Plato derided stories and said that poets should be banished from his utopia.[16] Artists, he claimed, are mere copiers of the world. They hold a mirror up to the world and the mirror reflects what is there.[17] Of course, in Plato's philosophy, the world is, itself, merely a copy of the eternal Forms which alone are ultimately real. Everything else derives its qualities from these Forms. So, for Plato, a work of art is a copy of a copy and is, thus, twice removed from ultimate

---

16 Plato, *The Republic*, 595b.

17 Ibid., 596e.

reality. "'[R]epresentative art is'", he says, "'an inferior child born of inferior parents.'"[18] We note this in passing, but there is no need for us to consider Forms theory further in this thesis. What Plato's mirror shows is less than the world it reflects, although, as Danto observes, "there are things we may see in [mirrors that] ... we cannot see without them, namely, ourselves.[19] The word that Plato used to describe this "reflection" is the Greek word "*μίμησις*". This word is usually translated into English as "copy" or "imitation" although sometimes the word "mimesis" is used. It is, therefore, often said that Plato and, by extension, Aristotle, argued that stories are imitations or copies of life.

Plato's remarks apply, in the first instance, to the painter or sculptor. It is an image that the mirror reflects. However, the dialogues make it clear that the real target of Plato's attack is the poet to whom he principally applied his comments. The poets, among whom Homer was pre-eminent, told the myths and the stories of the gods. However, Plato says, many of their stories are unwholesome: stories about philandering and warring gods (the poets' gods are human, all too human, for Plato). The poets do not tell only the truth, for some of what appears in their stories is not factual. Therefore, the poets lie. Even worse, the lies they tell are made to seem real and seductive by the manner of their telling. Poets do more than merely relate their tales. A simple recitation of events is closer to the truth than, for example, the use of speech and the imputation of thoughts to the heroes.[20] Poets, to give their stories a false verisimilitude, use such techniques.

It is well known that Plato's writings on this matter are not consistent and one suspects that he had a somewhat ambivalent attitude to the poets. He, himself,

---

18 Ibid., 603b.

19 Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981, p. 9.

20 Plato, *The Republic*, 394.

uses the dialogue form[21] to put words into people's mouths. He, himself, suggests the use of myths to maintain political order in his utopia.[22] Not only does he use poetic literary forms but also, in some other dialogues, he seems to talk highly of the poet. For example, in the *Ion*, Plato says that "the Muse ... inspires men herself... [and they] compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed."[23] Some writers, Martha Nussbaum for example,[24] suggest that Plato's inconsistencies are more apparent than real. Nussbaum suggests that Plato's work becomes more sophisticated in the later dialogues. *The Republic*, being of the middle period, does not, in Nussbaum's opinion, reflect Plato's mature view. We will set this difficulty aside and pursue Plato and his problem no further. My purpose in this brief discussion has not been to present a comprehensive discussion of Plato's approach to art but, rather, to place the present discussion in its overall context. The view of Plato presented here is the common understanding of Plato's approach to stories. If this is unfair to Plato, we will apologise and move forward.

If we turn to Aristotle, we see a rather different attitude to the works that Plato appears to have condemned. Aristotle, like Plato, described stories (principally the tragedies of ancient Greece) as "mimetic". Rather than treating such works as false, Aristotle accords them a high place; they tell forth universal truths. The mimetic effect is, for Aristotle, one of showing the universal in the particular. Since Aristotle thought that there are no ideal things, we rely on art to idealise: that idealisation helps us to understand the commonplace. Aristotle may have intended to go so far as to say that only an artistic idealisation can portray the

---

21 Aristotle refers to, inter alia, Plato's dialogues as a form of mimesis, *Poetics*, 1447b.

22 For example, in Plato, *The Republic*, 414.

23 Plato, *Ion* (transl. B. Jowett), New York: Random House, 1937, 534.

24 Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* rev. ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001.

essence of a thing just because it is a copy. Famously, Aristotle compared art with history. "[P]oetry," he said, "is more philosophical and more serious than history. Poetry tends to express universals, and history particulars."[25] The value of art, thus, exceeds that of history. Aristotle turns Plato on his head.

But, I want to suggest that "copy" is a poor way of understanding "mimesis". "Copy" or "imitation" is the usual English translation of the Greek word. But does such a translation adequately convey Aristotle's meaning? For over two millennia, it has been taken to be so. In an era when it was supposed that the purpose of the artist, particularly the painter, was to render things with a high degree of verisimilitude, this might have been an understandable attitude. Before the arrival of the modern novel, abstract art, and other new forms, this may have seemed an obvious requirement of art. Verisimilitude leads, fairly easily, to the idea of copying. It is not surprising that there has been, for a very long time, little argument over the claim that a mimesis is a copy or imitation. But, in a modern context, a work of art is obviously not (just) a copy. It is not, therefore, surprising that the idea that a story is mimetic, where a "mimesis" is construed as being a copy, has become discredited.

We will, therefore, commence our work by briefly considering the case against the idea that a work of art is a copy or an imitation. We will do this, in the first instance, without recourse to the writings of Aristotle.

Firstly, many works do not, in fact, imitate or copy anything.

Suppose that a painting is a copy (or imitation) of something and that a story describes that of which it is, supposedly, a copy. This approach seems to work for some objects. A painting describes by making an image with paint (or some other suitable medium) while a story describes in words. Rubens' *Self Portrait* (National Gallery of Australia, Canberra) is an image of the painter. Even this

---

25 Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1451b.

idea is not uncontroversial. What is a copy? In what ways does the portrait resemble Rubens? After all, Rubens' *Self Portrait* is more like another painting, say, Constable's *The Hay Wain* (National Gallery, London) than it is, or ever was, like Rubens. A story is given in words. Events (except, perhaps speech events) are not given in words and certainly they are not usually printed. So, how can a text be a copy (except of another text)? A declaimed text may, perhaps, imitate an original speech and one painting may copy another. Even if we ignore the considerable difficulty of saying how a story can be a copy, we are left with further problems.

It is clearly not possible to copy something which does not exist. It is not possible, for example, to paint a copy of Pegasus since we cannot put Pegasus on the table to copy. Even if Zeus exists, we cannot put him on the table to copy. If we take two different Madonnas, for example that of Botticelli (Academia Gallery, Florence) and that of Filippino Lippi (Uffizi, Florence), it is clear that they cannot both be copies of the same mother. One of them, at least, must be "false" as a copy! Of course, they could both be "false".

Consider the *Venus of Urbino* by Titian (Uffizi, Florence). It is clearly not a portrait of Venus. It may be a portrait of Titian's model. If so, that fact seems to be largely irrelevant. It is a painting (or an image) of Venus lying naked on a couch and we take it to be so (partly from the inscription beneath the work in the gallery but partly from its subject matter and other internal clues). What is the case with Manet's *Olympia* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris) with its obvious reference to Titian's work? Of whom, or of what, is it a copy?

The same kinds of problems arise with stories (or any literary production). Some readers, but by no means all, may be prepared to grant that an historical account, such as Caesar's *Gallic Wars*, is a description of events that occurred, albeit a partial one. We may be prepared to agree that such a work imitates or copies (using the medium of words) the events described. What are we to say of a play

like Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*? It is not an historical description but a version. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is even further from the "truth" in that it completely misrepresents the historical data. In what sense can Tolstoy's *War and Peace* be considered historical; it seems to contain historical characters. If we consider a novel such as *Pride and Prejudice*, we have a story, which is not a description, so far as we know, of any persons or events (although it seems possible that it is). We can take a step further and consider Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*, which contains sorts of characters (ghosts) which we do not think are denizens of this world. A story like Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, describes events that, I take it, cannot occur. People do not turn into giant beetles. Fantasy and science fiction stories, novels such as *The Lord of the Rings* or *Dune*, contain characters and events (sorts of events such as extended life spans, invisibility rings, travel through "hyper space") which, we take it, are not possible. These things do not seem to be possible in this world and may not be possible in any world.

These things do not exist in the actual world and cannot, therefore, be copied. It might be possible to suggest that Titian's *Venus*, is an imitation of the goddess (although I do not see how), but invisibility rings do not imitate anything or any possible scenario. Fictional novels, generally, describe events which have not occurred.

The second objection argues that a copy, however realistic, is only ever a point of view. A story is always told from some point of view. It is not possible to tell it as it is (and who would want to read it if it were, somehow, told in all its unvarnished detail). The storyteller selects, edits and arranges material. There can be many, very different, accounts of the same (actual or imagined) event(s). There can be many paintings of the same subject (there are, as we have observed, numerous Madonnas, no two exactly alike). The students in an art class can all paint the same nude and yet produce twenty different paintings. No painting or story can tell everything and to tell less is to select and, thus, to produce a version. But a version is not a copy; it may be a representation. We acknowledge that a

photograph is an artistic production just because it does select what and how to present its material. Not even Plato's reflection in a mirror represents an absolute point of view. Aristotle was well aware that tragedies select an event or a myth and tell it from a particular point of view to gain the desired (artistic) effect.

The final objection asks the difficult question: what is it to provide an imitation or a copy? We have already suggested that the answer is far from obvious. To explore the question it will be necessary to use the terms "imitation" and "copy"; they will be used in a very loose way to demonstrate that they cannot be the answer to our problem.

If there is a painting on the wall, I can copy it to make a painting that is like it. If I do a good enough job, it is conceivable that the copy would be indistinguishable from the original. If my copy is not quite so good, to that extent, it is not a copy, for there are things in the "copy" that are not in the original and vice versa. I can imitate something. I can imitate the way you walk by walking that way. I can imitate the style of a painter by painting in that manner. It is conceivable that an imitation of that sort could deceive an expert into believing that this was a painting by the painter in question; that may be the intention as is the case with a forgery or it may not be. There have, of course, been such cases in both the areas of painting and of music. I may imitate the style (even subconsciously) of someone whose work I like. But these are not copies in the sense we are considering. I cannot imitate Venus and neither can a painting.

How can I copy or imitate, even a factual situation let alone a fictional one, using words? How is a play a copy of an historical incident, say? We might agree that it reproduces or represents that incident. We might call it a re-enactment. But it is not a copy. If I paint a portrait, in what sense is that a copy of the sitter? Again, we might say that it is a likeness of the sitter. Even then, the problems in using that term abound. If I make a bronze statue or a plaster "likeness" of someone, is that a copy? After all it is only made of plaster, and not flesh and blood. How do

we copy the gods, or how do we imitate them? How do we copy or imitate a situation that is not, never has been and almost certainly never will be? Perhaps there is no need to continue this line of reasoning. We can see that the claim that a story copies or imitates anything quickly becomes incoherent. Our earlier objections suggested this result.

If "mimesis" just means "copy" then that would be the end of the argument. But I do not think that was Aristotle's use of the term. Both Aristotle and Plato were aware that not everything the poet tells us is simply a copy. This was Plato's objection; the poets "make it up" or tell lies. Aristotle said that the mimesis idealises things to display their essence. Mimesis, therefore, cannot be simply a copy or an imitation.

I will argue that a better understanding of the meaning of "mimesis" is gained through a consideration of the wider concept of representation. I will suggest that a work of art, and a story in particular, is representational. I will argue both that a theory of mimesis as representation better accords with Aristotle's *Poetics* and also provides a way of understanding modern literary works. A copy or an imitation can be a representation but a representation need not be a copy. I will suggest that this approach subsumes the idea of "copy", at least in the context that is of concern to us, while incorporating its best features.[26]

A story, I thus claim, represents something. We will discuss the general notion of "representation" before specifying precisely what it is that a story represents. Not all art, it might well be argued, is representational. Much painting is non-representational and some poetry may be non-representational. An example of the latter might be a work such as *Jabberwocky*. Certainly much modern painting is not representational (although, perhaps, not as much as some people suppose).

---

26 There is, of course, the use of the word "copy" to mean, roughly, "replicate". That use applies to genetic material and, possibly, to artefacts coming from a production line or, even, to the printing of books. But that usage is not applicable here and "represent" can hardly subsume it.

But most written work represents something and certainly a story, I claim, does so. I am not, here, assuming what I set out to show; I merely need to exclude certain types of work from our discussion. I still must show that "representation" is a more appropriate concept than "imitate" or "copy". A "story" which could not be subsumed under the idea of representation would have no plot and, thus, not be a story at all (in terms of our definition). Such work is, by definition, excluded from this thesis.

In general terms, representation allows us to imagine, and perhaps identify or recognise, the thing represented. An art book contains representations of works of art hanging on gallery walls. We may even call such things copies, although what we see in an art book is, in many ways, quite unlike the painting hanging on the wall. The police may show us a photograph of a suspect and ask us if this is the man we saw. The photograph represents the man so that we can (or at least might) recognise him from the photograph. If we see him on some other occasion, we may remember the photograph and report the fact.

Suppose I ask you for directions to Tom's place and you tell me to continue straight ahead and take the second on the left, saying that Tom lives five houses along in the house with the blue door. I can follow these directions to get to Tom's house under normal circumstances. This would represent (in language) the directions; it is hardly a copy or an imitation. A map is a representation. It needs a special sort of understanding, however, for the "reader" to decipher the representation. If you give me, in a lecture, an outline of David Hume's philosophy, I learn something. All of these are forms of representation. It is possible to represent falsely. For example, the directions to Tom's house may be wrong and may, thus, represent falsely. This may be done deliberately or in error. Things, which are not, may be represented; and things may be represented which are not (as, many say, is done in a fiction). Thus, a unicorn or time travel can be the subject of representation.

As we have noted, it is clear that Aristotle and Plato were not ignorant of any of this. Plato wanted to exclude poets just because they had the capacity to represent falsely. Aristotle claimed that the representation (could be) a universalising thing just because it is not specific to any one thing, that is to say, not a simple copy.

I am not (necessarily) claiming that all art works are representations. As I have already said, those that are not, are not mimetic. I am, at least prima facie, ignoring abstract paintings and music. I do not argue either that these are or are not representations but, for our purposes, stories, as defined, clearly are and that is sufficient. I have, in this discussion, used paintings and verbal artefacts (including "plain" speech) as illustrations keeping to conservative examples. There may be cases where there is not agreement over what is a representation, for example, is Picasso's *Weeping Woman* (Penrose Collection, London) a representation? It may not allow us to identify the model in the same way as a photograph of the criminal may allow us to identify the criminal. I think the Picasso painting is a representation, (it clearly represents something, namely, a weeping woman, but perhaps not a particular weeping woman). It is no argument to claim that we would not recognise the sitter for the painting, for we are not required to do so. I may also fail to recognise the criminal in the police file photograph. Is *Jabberwocky* a representation? It is probably not a representation; the best that can be claimed for it is that it is suggestive. Again, such marginal cases are not important and do not affect the argument. *Alice in Wonderland* is, I think, a representation. It is clearly a story; events (strange events admittedly) occur.

I think it is fair to suggest that, in Aristotle's day, all works were representations, at the "conservative" end of the spectrum of representation; there was no recognised abstract art or nonsense poetry, although some of Aristophanes' plays may come close to the modern theatre of the absurd. No doubt, with the exception of pure decoration, Aristotle thought his theory covered all art. He even included music as being covered by his theory of mimesis. He argued that music was mimetic in that it rouses the emotions. Its emotive value was linked to the mode

of the music. We may not agree with his analysis. In ancient Greece, music existed mainly to complement performances of some sort — either drama or dance — and certainly, Aristotle's analysis of music could not accommodate the modern symphonic work. We do not need to consider this particular aspect of Aristotle's theory further. I merely observe that Aristotle included all art in his mimetic theory. We need not follow him that far; it is sufficient to note that stories are mimetic. We can, therefore, exclude so-called abstract art and music from our discussion. That is not to take a stand on this issue but to recognise that the failure to substantiate any claim in the matter does not affect the more restricted claims being made here.

We have already defined a story as having a plot. That is to say it represents a state-of-affairs as changing or unfolding in time. A story contains characters; these characters may develop over the time of the story; we may see their "personalities" change as the story unfolds or we may learn more about those personalities. Such characters may be complex or simple. A story also has a location. That is to say that the plot and the characters develop at a place or places. The plot may develop at just one location (in the story), as is so in *The Turn of the Screw* or *Hamlet*, or the plot may develop in a very elaborate and complex location, as in *The Divine Comedy*. But how can any of these things be represented if they are not actual? As I have said above, I will defer that question for the moment. I will, later, attempt to provide some sort of analysis of the boundaries of stories. I am not claiming that all writing is representational. It is possible to write in a non-representational manner (where language is used for its own sake, playfully). Some "novels" and poems may be of that kind. To the extent that they do not represent, I will argue that they (or parts of them) are not stories. A work such as *Jabberwocky* is, to put it bluntly, clever and tantalising

but meaningless. We will, in the next chapter, have occasion to consider a work by Gass[27] that presents similar difficulties.

It has often been noted that rarely is the imitation or representation "good" enough to fool us into thinking that the thing being represented is "real". The ancients talked about the painting of Xeuxis as being so good that the birds pecked at the grapes (only, I presume, to be disappointed at the result); occasionally a *trompe l'oeil* picture may fool us (if only briefly). We are, however, not fooled into believing that Anna Karenina "really" committed suicide. Yet we still cry for her and her fate. We may take some stories, such as the legends surrounding King Arthur to be about people who may have really existed or we may come to believe that the legends are based on some distant reality, but we certainly recognise that many stories are not so based.

Translating Aristotle

Most translators of Aristotle's *Poetics* still use the word "copy" or "imitation" to translate the Greek word "*μίμησις*".[28] Halliwell talks of the "dangerous inadequacy"[29] of this translation for a proper understanding of Aristotle. He is adamant that the word, "*μίμησις*" is better translated as "representation" and he uses that term, or the (English) word "mimesis" consistently.

---

27 William H. Gass, *Willie Masters' Lonesome Wife,* Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1998.

28 This Greek word, "*μίμησις*" may also be translated into the English equivalent "mimesis" and it is this word that will be used in this thesis. Our immediate purpose, now, is, however, to come to a suitable understanding of the meaning of the term.

29 Halliwell, "Aristotelian Mimesis Revisited", p. 489.

Malcolm Heath, who translated the *Poetics* for Penguin, uses "imitation". He does, however, admit that "[m]any scholars would object to this rendering, and prefer 'representation'."[30] Heath gives as his reasons for preferring "imitation" firstly, that mimesis implies a similarity that does not rest simply on convention. A representation, he says, may be purely conventional and, as such, is not adequate to give Aristotle's meaning. Secondly, he says that mimesis has a continuity across a number of uses, including animal mimicry and children's games. He says that representation lacks both these aspects.[31] Yet, Heath concedes that the word "imitation" is not quite right either. Butcher, a much earlier translator, makes similar comments. He calls the word "imitation" "inadequate"[32] but uses it as being the most suitable English word available. Butcher says that he prefers to avoid the use of terms such as "symbol". Symbols are, he claims, conventional. A symbol signifies by convention and, so, he claims, lacks the element of similarity that is, he claims, captured by "copy". He seems to be in agreement with Heath. Butcher says, for example, of facial expressions (which may be taken to symbolise varied emotions) that, "they are not conventional symbols, ... but living signs."[33] He means, I think, that some things are natural symbols and are understood by the viewer (or reader) to be like the thing symbolised so that the "meaning" of the symbol is understood apart from convention. Such symbols, I presume, he would be prepared to count as mimeses.

Butcher puts forward no argument to substantiate this claim but seems to suppose that it is self-evident. But it is not self-evident. In what way is an actor's facial expression symbolic of grief? The expression certainly represents grief. Butcher, we remember, says that some things are natural symbols. But what things and how is something artificial in contrast to something else which is natural. In many

---

30 Aristotle, *Poetics* (transl. Malcolm Heath), translator's introduction, p. xiii.

31 Ibid.

32 S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art with a Critical Text and Translation,* London: MacMillan, 1895, p. 116.

cultures the throwing of ashes symbolises grief. In other cultures, professional mourners attend funerals. But need these things: throwing ashes or facial expressions, function as natural symbols? In other societies, the same actions and expressions may be used for some other purpose. Actors do use facial expressions which, in our society, are so taken. That is all we can say.

Heath seems to agree with Butcher, for he argues that a dot on a map may represent an airport but it is not a mimesis. A scale plan would, he says, be![34] Yet, a scale plan is only a representation. It is necessary to pick out how and in what ways the drawing copies the original. It is lines on paper; it is not made of concrete; it does not contain reinforcing steel; planes do not leave the scale plan or the dot on the map. That is to say, we need to know how the drawing represents the (actual) airport. This is a conventional thing. In like manner, the dot on the map also represents the airport. It represents it in terms of its location vis-a-vis other (suitably scaled) landmarks such as roads or, even, land masses. We are taught to read plans and maps at school. Many works of art require training for their representational qualities to become apparent. Such works are mimetic but an understanding of the conventions that underpin them is necessary if the works are to be understood. This is so, not only of modern works but also of art works in general. It is so of ancient works or Christian painting of the middle ages, or of art produced by other cultures, for example, the dot painting of the Australian Aborigines, and it is so of Greek tragedy. It is also the case with works produced by our own culture; we have learned to recognise them and to live with them so readily that we often fail to recognise any problem.

The tragedies of Aeschylus and other Greek tragedians were usually based upon a well-known mythical, or historical event. The play, as presented, was designed to evoke and, in some sense, reproduce that event. Greek painting and sculpture were what is called "realistic". But they were not copies of things. Phidias, I

---

33 Ibid., p. 127.

presume, had never seen Athena. We have already observed that, in Aristotle's day, most art was either decorative or "realistic". This measure of verisimilitude may allow translators such as Butcher to get away with using a word like "imitation". But, in our context, the inadequacies of this word become manifest.

It is not my purpose, here, to engage deeply with questions about the translation of Greek philosophical works. Such a task would require a different thesis from this and it would require a scholar schooled in Greek. Here we are simply attempting to come to a suitable understanding of the term "mimesis". A suitable understanding, for our purposes, is one that must serve us in our present context. That includes Plato's and Aristotle's usage and must cover the works extant when they were alive, but must extend to include the sorts of works that are available today. To arrive, therefore, at a suitable understanding, we may start with Plato and Aristotle and their translators but we cannot stop there. Our notion of mimesis must be wide enough to encompass the modern novel and modern paintings and plays; we have already noted this requirement. We need a notion of mimesis that will accommodate the sorts of plays and other works, principally sculpture and painting, with which Aristotle was familiar but will also accommodate more recent works.

Mimesis and Catharsis

I want to turn now to the analysis of mimesis offered by Leon Golden.[35] Golden, in looking to understand mimesis, considered, first, what Aristotle means by

---

34 Aristotle, *Poetics* (transl. Malcolm Heath), translator's introduction, p. xiii.

35 Leon Golden, *Aristotle on Tragic and Artistic Mimesis,* Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, Atlanta, 1992.

catharsis. Golden observes that, for Aristotle, the mimesis produces the catharsis; so, a tragedy produces its effect by *κάθαρσις*.[36] Golden commences with this question as a means of working towards a better understanding of Aristotle's idea of mimesis. Golden argues that to understand mimesis it is necessary, first, to understand catharsis. Further, any understanding of how mimesis works must be such that the mimesis is capable of producing the cathartic effect.

We attend a performance of a tragedy. We see, represented there, distressing events. We enjoy ourselves (amid our tears). Why do we go to see such performances? How can we enjoy ourselves? Aristotle tells us that we experience catharsis when we attend these performances. The question of the meaning of "catharsis" has been much discussed but I will restrict my discussion to the work of Golden.

This term has been variously understood as: a medical effect wherein excess stresses are purged leaving the body clear and healthy; a psychological effect whereby excess emotional energy is discharged leaving the person psychologically refreshed; the final contender is an intellectual effect where the viewer of the play is brought to understand and to see things more clearly leaving the intellect clear.

Golden dismisses the first two possibilities as being inadequate for the result that Aristotle attributes to tragedy in particular. Golden acknowledges that there is a medical usage of the term and that Aristotle uses it in the *Politics*.[37] But, Golden then claims that the idea of "medical purgation" is "intrusive"[38] in the context of the *Poetics* and is inadequate for the task that Aristotle encompasses there.

---

36 Golden uses the word "katharsis" as a transliteration of the Greek word, "*κάθαρσις*". We will follow normal practice and use the English word, "catharsis".

37 Ibid., p. 37.

38 Ibid.

Golden points to Aristotle's claim that "by nature, all men long to know."[39] Aristotle's claim is, Golden argues, that it is this desire to know which underpins the satisfaction we feel at the theatre. This cathartic effect is, he claims, also the cause of the pleasure we feel at the comedy or, indeed, in the presence of any art work. This result is primarily an intellectual result and can comprise a number of aspects of coming to know or of understanding. We can learn a wide variety of things from such works: we can learn about the world or about ourselves. We can also learn moral lessons.

Moral lessons, it has often been claimed, are what literature and art are for. Sir Philip Sidney, for example,[40] put forward this argument to defend poetry against its detractors. Poetry, he said, has value because it teaches us moral lessons. Golden agrees that, sometimes, poetry can teach us such lessons. There are many stories telling of the triumph of good over evil; even the phrase is hackneyed. Golden cites Sophocles' *Antigone* as an example where a play may be considered to point a moral lesson. The moral conundrum is discussed: should Antigone obey the law of the land imposed by Creon or the natural law of affinity for her brother? This is a complex moral issue and not the simple good versus evil that seems to be so common. Yet stories do not always show the triumph of good or point a moral lesson (at least not directly). In Monteverdi's beautiful opera, *The Coronation of Poppeia,* for example, evil wins out.

So, we cannot argue that poetry teaches us morality simpliciter! Golden does not so argue. His claim is that we learn from such works. Moral lessons are only one sort of intellectual catharsis we may obtain from a work. What we learn may be a moral lesson, but it may be that a play teaches us other lessons, for not all lessons are moral lessons. We may learn instantly or we may take a long time to digest

---

39 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (transl. Hugh Lawson-Tancred), London: Penguin Books, London, 1998, 980a.

40 Philip Sidney, A *Defence of Poetry* (ed. J. A. Van Dorsten), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966.

and learn from a story. Golden says that there are many ways, of which moral lessons are but one, in which we can gain an intellectual catharsis from such works. So there must be a wider use of the term, for Aristotle, as a mode of learning.

Golden, thus, argues that catharsis is a wide term, incorporating the idea of emotional purgation but emphasising the notion of understanding. This is the effect we experience when we attend the tragedy but also when we attend the comedy. Catharsis cannot be limited to a narrow mode of operation.

Catharsis, he says, is not a simple phenomenon but a

> credible mechanism for subsuming under a single concept, many diverse views. It recognises the powerful role emotional motivation and emotional response play in tragedy; it accepts the centrality of ethical issues in many tragedies ... and it fully acknowledges the possibility of a therapeutic effect as a result of the encounter with the tragic mimesis. It requires, however, that we understand that central to all of our experiences with tragedy and other literary genres is an act of intellectual insight elicited by verbal stimuli.[41]

Although Golden, here, concentrates upon the intellectual effects of catharsis, he makes it clear that catharsis can operate at any level and that the principle holds good for works of any "literary genre". Before completing Golden's argument, it is important to understand the scope of catharsis. In *The Poetics*, Aristotle was concerned mainly with tragedy. Aristotle is widely believed to have written a companion volume, now lost, concentrating on comedy. Some, therefore, argue that any result we can derive from *The Poetics*, is only applicable to tragedy and that we cannot generalise, as we wish to do, to other forms of literary works.

Golden emphatically rejects such an argument. There is no big division between comedy and tragedy. For Aristotle, tragedy and comedy are all mimetic.[42] "The

---

41 Golden, *Aristotle on Tragic and Artistic Mimesis,* p. 39.

42 Aristotle, *The Poetics*, 1447a.

essential difference between tragedy and comedy for Aristotle lies in the opposed kinds of character and action both represent"[43], Golden argues. Tragedy is about, essentially, noble characters caught up in circumstances, where comedy concerns itself with the "laughable"[44], that is ignoble characters caught up in problems of their own making. If tragedy reveals something about ourselves, so does comedy. Aristophanes' plays, for example, show up, in their comic denouement, how those flaws make the characters ridiculous and fail. If pity arises from the tragic, indignation arises from the comic. Just as we pity the tragic hero, we become indignant at the ridiculous behaviour of the comic character, when ignoble characters fail, we experience catharsis also. Golden, thus, argues that "one essential pleasure is assigned [by Aristotle] to all forms of mimesis, including tragic and comic mimesis, and that is the pleasure of learning and inference."[45]

Some stories may offer very little in the way of an intellectual catharsis and, at the end of this thesis, we will consider some popular and some classic literary works. The catharsis may not always be "deep". Some works may have more value as entertainment or diversion than they have as the vehicle for an intellectual catharsis. They may be gruesome, exciting or romantic. However, works of that kind are never tragedies and it is tragedies that require the full extent of catharsis if they are to work. Anything less would result, not in a tragedy or a comedy, but in a farce.[46]

We will have more to say about learning from stories much later in this thesis, where we will establish a means whereby the (intellectual) catharsis can be generated. Before we can do that, we need to establish our main thesis. We should, however, note that Golden is claiming that catharsis is a general effect

---

43 Golden, *Aristotle on Tragic and Artistic Mimesis,* p. 67.

44 Aristotle, *The Poetics*, 1448b. Golden translates this word as "ridiculous".

45 Golden, *Aristotle on Tragic and Comic Mimesis,* p. 102.

46 For example *Romeo and Juliet* is tragedy but the similar "Pyramus and Thisbe" story in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a farce.

applying to art works in general, including stories of both the comic and the tragic kind. It is also an encompassing effect. It ranges from some form of intellectual relief (perhaps what is called escapism) through an emotionally restorative effect to an intellectual awakening. The cathartic effect has value in different ways and can teach us lessons of all kinds.

Let us, now, return to the detail of Golden's argument and bring it to a conclusion. Golden argues that Aristotle's use of the term "mimesis" must be consistent with the idea of "catharsis" as he has expounded it. If Aristotle puts such emphasis on mimesis as effecting catharsis in this manner then mimesis, whatever it is, must be up to the task. This is not to say that a story can never be understood as an imitation but it is to say that imitation is not an adequate concept to cover all stories. To do that, we need to move to a wider concept and the concept I am proposing is representation. This is a result with which Halliwell, as we have already noted, strongly agrees.

Golden summarises his claims about Aristotelian mimesis by saying that mimesis is "a tightly structured process involving, in different arts, different means of representation, different manners of communicating that representation to an audience, and different moral and ethical states as the object of artistic representation."[47] He proceeds by observing that some arts use paint and colour and similar means to represent where others, such as the play, use words and require a stage and so forth. We also notice that, in this passage, Golden specifically describes a mimesis as a representation.

My argument is simple: one cannot imitate or copy the gods, or the characters and events in many modern novels, for they are very unlike anything we know. But one can represent these things. Mimesis is representation. A story, I am claiming, represents something. What is represented is still to be identified. That will be our next task.

---

47 Golden, *Aristotle on Tragic and Artistic Mimesis,* p. 64.

Neither am I claiming that a work is no more than a representation. Any work requires material and skill for its creation. The quality or supposed realism of a representation may or may not contribute to the aesthetics of the work. The ways the materials (words, or paint or whatever the work is made from) are used by the work's creator obviously contribute significantly to the work and the way it will be understood and accepted. Such questions are aesthetic questions and lie beyond the scope of this work. At this stage of our argument, we have not proved Aristotle to be right. His discussion of the problem is, merely, our starting point, although, we will discover, that our pathway from here to its end continually intersects with the lines of Aristotle's thinking. When we reach that end, we will have a comprehensive account, starting with this understanding of mimesis and catharsis, of how stories can make sense.

Representing Story-Worlds

In the previous section, I have argued that a mimesis is a representation. If this is so, then what does a story represent? What does a story such as *Metamorphosis* represent? Clearly, it cannot represent any state-of-affairs in this world. For it to do that it would have to, at least, relate events that have occurred. But these stories have not, so far as we know, occurred. So, how can we represent such things? How can we represent people turning into giant beetles, or the goddess Venus, or Pegasus, or anything that is not there (to be represented)? We seem to have gained very little. We must now, as promised earlier, answer this question.

A photograph of a criminal, perhaps for identification, represents the criminal in question. It is intended that we see the criminal and recognise him from the representation. Instructions to get to Tom's house may be followed to get to

Tom's house. A portrait represents the sitter and so on. In these cases I have argued that representation is a better way of seeing a work than copy or imitation. A photograph of a criminal is not a copy of the criminal, neither is it an imitation. The dot on the map represents the airport; so does the plan or the painting or the scale model. Representation can exist in very many forms. The essential requirement, in these examples, is that we can identify or imagine the thing represented. The dot on the map allows us to identify the airport; a skilled pilot can follow the map to arrive at the correct dot (something which always amazes me). The photograph allows us to identify the criminal.

But not everything is so neatly settled. Manet's *Olympia* is not a portrait of anyone. Neither is Titian's *Venus of Urbino*. To the extent that these things may be a representation of the painter's model, that is irrelevant. *Pride and Prejudice*, although we may consider it to be "realistic", does not represent, so far as we know, any actual persons or events. Certainly *Metamorphosis* does not do so. Sometimes a writer uses events and characters she knows and bases her work around these. The painter may have used a model to paint a work; but that does not make the work a portrait of the model. What the *Venus of Urbino* represents is Venus and not the woman who was used by Titian as his model even though, as a "copy", it is a better "copy" of the model than it is a "copy" of Venus. What then does a mimesis of Elizabeth Bennet, in *Pride and Prejudice*, represent? Even if the "portrait" of Elizabeth given to us by Austen is a realistic description of a certain person known to Austen,[48] the novel does not represent that person. If it is, as is quite likely, an amalgam drawn from a number of acquaintances, we would not want to say that the novel represents any (or all) of those people. It is likely that some of the characters in the novel are, largely, drawn from acquaintances of Austen's. The character of Mrs. Bennet, for example, borders on caricature. A caricature, such as is used by political cartoonists, may represent someone in the world, such as a politician. But the character of Mrs. Bennet,

---

48 So far as I am aware, it is not.

although it may capture some characteristics of some people, could hardly be said to represent any particular person in this world.

Of course, it is possible to see Titian's painting as a portrait. The model may have been independently famous and the painting may provide a likeness, or I may have a personal interest in the model (she may have been a forbear of mine). Similarly, there may be characters in a novel that are drawn from known persons in whom we are, independently, interested. It would be a legitimate activity to use such material for historical purposes. But then, we would not be treating that material as a story, and certainly not as a fictional story. The material, in that case, would be input to a critical, historical analysis and be raw material for that. It is, of course, necessary to interpret any work and it may be important to distinguish fictional stories from those which are (or purport to be) non-fictional. We will consider the question of interpretation in the next chapter and the question of fiction and non-fiction in a later chapter.

So, what is represented? The answer I give is simple: a story or a fiction represents a world. According to Halliwell, this view of representation is quite consistent with Aristotle's argument. He says that "Aristotle believes that mimetic representation is a formal equivalent of an imaginable reality."[49] This is an important claim. I am suggesting that Aristotle's imaginable reality is the world of the story. Halliwell further argues that this representation occurs through "significant verbal structures"[50] that is to say, through the text (or its equivalent). We will explore the imaginative creation of that world in a later chapter.

The story, *Pride and Prejudice*, represents a world, namely, the world of *Pride and Prejudice*. That world is like the world described in the novel. I will refer to such a world as a story-world. The world of *Pride and Prejudice* is the Pride and Prejudice story-world. The world of the *Venus of Urbino* is the Venus of Urbino

---

49 Halliwell, "Aristotelian Mimesis Revisited", p. 498.

50 Ibid., p. 501.

story-world. The Pride and Prejudice story-world has a more complex plot than the Venus of Urbino story-world but the latter is richer in other ways. It is, perhaps, arguable that the *Venus of Urbino* implies a story but many observers would say that it fails to meet the requirement of being a story (since it is a painting and does not, formally at least, have a plot). Since we are looking specifically at stories, we will not worry about any supposed deficiencies with the Venus of Urbino story-world but, rather, concentrate our attention on the story-worlds arising from novels and other written (or spoken) works.

It is a commonplace to talk of "the world of ..." where we can fill in the placeholder with different types of things. We can talk of the world of Elizabeth Bennet or the world of *Pride and Prejudice* or the world of Jane Austen or the world of early nineteenth century rural England. We can talk of the world of Sherlock Holmes, meaning some sort of composite world drawn from the totality of the Doyle Sherlock Holmes stories and peopled with the various characters mentioned in those stories. It could be argued that Conan Doyle invites such a treatment of his work where, for example, Jane Austen does not. In this thesis, I want to concentrate on story-worlds made from just a single story, that is, a story which involves one connected narrative. This is a simplification but it is not one which will affect our discussion or invalidate our findings. These findings could be extended, in obvious ways, to take in forms and combinations such as those just mentioned. When I say a single story, I mean what is commonly understood to be just one story. Such a thing may be a story or novel printed between the covers of a book or a set of books suitably labelled (the ubiquitous trilogy). Or it may be a short story, printed as such, in a collection of short stories. It may be a recitation or a play or a film. It will not affect our findings if we cannot agree, in marginal cases, if a story is one story or several (because, as I have just suggested, the thesis could be extended to cover such cases). Not all stories are simple. We will have occasion to note some of the complexities of *Hamlet* for example. But the things I am calling stories, including *Hamlet*, are unified in the way just identified. It is easy to extend the treatment offered here to story-worlds

constructed from some sort of amalgam of several stories, although, as has been suggested, we will not follow that path. The world of Jane Austen is, however, an attempt to reconstruct some (supposed) historical reality — a time and place based around a person of interest to us; such a usage is not one that this thesis is considering.

Using this simple and commonplace idea of a story-world for the purposes of explaining how stories can make sense is hardly new, but what is new is, I think, the way in which the idea is used in this thesis as more than just a *façon de parler.* A story-world may be simple or complex. The story may be a "simple" recitation of events or it may include detailed and complex information about the *dramatis personae* and their thought processes. It may be presented in many different forms: as a recollection in the first person; as a detective style reconstruction; as a straight narrative presented by an omniscient narrator; and so forth. The method chosen to tell the story, may affect our reaction to the story, but that is a matter that does not bear directly on our problem yet.

A world is what a story describes. The answer to the question: "what does the *Oresteia* represent?" is "it represents the world of the *Oresteia* or the Oresteia story-world." The question of the veracity or the status of the story vis-a-vis this world then becomes a separate issue from that of the story itself. We can profitably read, for example, The Bible, without saying it is true of this world (although we may also say that). But it can still be true of its own world (and it must be).

Some of the stories mentioned so far could represent the "real" world. *Pride and Prejudice* could, we all suppose, occur. So could *War and Peace.* It is even possible that *The Divine Comedy* represents things as they are (many of us will be very surprised should it turn out to be so). We take it that *Metamorphosis* or *The Tempest* could not represent a possible state-of-affairs in the "real", or, perhaps, any other, world. It is impossible to decide where realism starts and ends. But we

don't need to do so. This approach is indifferent to how realistic a work is (or is claimed to be). We are not talking of Lewisian possible worlds.[51]

Most commentators do not take it that Dante or Kafka lied to us by representing things as they are almost certainly not. Yet it is common to suppose that the representation must be realistic and many people do not enjoy fantasy or science fiction for just that reason. It is common to hear certain novels criticised as unrealistic. To criticise *Metamorphosis* on such grounds seems to be beside the point. We will need to understand how this can be. That discussion will be taken up in following chapters.

The story-world includes everything that is necessary for the understanding of the story. There are ghosts (at least one) in the Hamlet story-world. There may or may not be ghosts in the "real" world. The story-world is that thing represented by the story and is, therefore, the way the story is (or is interpreted, by the reader, to be). Clearly, different readers interpret stories differently and this question must be taken up in the next chapter. We will set this question aside for the moment and, at this stage of our argument, talk as if a story-world is a unique thing (that is to say, as if stories have a single interpretation, and we all know what it is).

Some approaches to stories treat those stories as providing information about something else. Stories are not, these approaches claim, about story-worlds, or anything else like that. They are about something hidden deep within the psychology of human beings or the author. Structuralism and deconstruction are cases in point. They treat stories as being about something other than the world of the story. Structuralism, for example, claims that the "real" meaning of any story lies in its deep structure. Deconstruction looks for details in a text and uses them to undermine the assumptions built into that text.

---

51 I will take up David Lewis' thesis of possible worlds, known as modal realism, in a later chapter.

Vladimir Propp[52] analysed fairytales, or that group of fairytales called wondertales, into strands or pieces of narrative. Different stories exhibit these pieces; perhaps some pieces are missing from some stories but the pieces are always presented, in the story, in the same sequence.[53] The purpose of structural analysis is to map a particular story (the one being analysed) to a standard set of ideas, motives or themes. Propp "boldly reduced all folk tales to seven 'spheres of action' and thirty one fixed elements or 'functions.' Any individual folk tale merely combined these"[54] to produce the given story. Propp said that this "fact" allowed him to analyse the stories using a method that "makes it possible to rise above the plot [of an individual wondertale or fairytale] and study the genre of the wondertale as a whole".[55]

The structuralist approach to stories separates the details of plot and character from what the story is said to be "really" about. It is not clear what the stories are really about if it is not witches, tsars and princesses but Propp seems to think that the "meaning" lies buried within human psychology or ancient cultural norms of which it "preserves traces".[56] Most of the work carried out under the structuralist banner, while interesting, does not use sophisticated examples but concentrates on the analysis of (apparently) simple stories, mainly fairytales and folktales. The most sophisticated story analysed, so far as I am aware, by structuralist commentators is Balzac's short story *Sarrasine*; Barthes offers a structuralist

---

52 I am treating Propp as if he were a structuralist. But Propp would have described himself as a formalist, see, for example, Vladimir Propp, *Theory and History of Folklore* (ed. Anatoly Liberman, transl. Adriana Y. Martin and Richard P. Martin et al), Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984, p. 67, where he describes Lévi-Strauss as a structuralist in contrast to himself. The difference will not affect the argument presented here.

53 Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale,* (2nd ed.). (transl. Laurence Scott, rev. Louis A. Wagner), Austen, TX: University of Texas Press, 1975, p. 22.

54 Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983, p. 104.

55 Propp, *Theory and History of Folklore*, p. 72.

reading of this story in *S/Z*.[57] The structuralist approach seems to deny any status to stories at all. They have a structure and that is all (at least, that is all that is of interest to the structuralist reader). As for characters, they have been completely subjugated to the structure. Barthes recognises this as a problem, claiming that it is a problem he shares with Aristotle.[58] He moves to a solution of this problem, by defining the characters as operating within the plot and their characters as constructed from the relevant elements of the plot. Barthes calls such characters actants, to emphasise that role.

I do not wish to deny that a story may have some such structure and that one may be able to analyse stories in these terms. However, to treat them thus is not to treat them as stories. That is to say, the details of the plot and characters are treated in a violent manner and are assimilated to a standard, external to the story and its text. I also suggest that structuralism does violence to how we "read" a story. We do see it as telling us about something: dragons and witches, men and women. We do not (usually) search the details of the story, manipulating them as we go and stringing them out into discreet pieces.

To read a story and to make a story-world is to treat a story as something creative and interesting in its own right rather than as grist for some other mill. To repeat, I am not arguing that stories cannot be treated in the manner required by structuralist analysis or in the way they are used by deconstruction. Plainly they can be so used. I am not even arguing that such analysis is illegitimate. This thesis says nothing, either in favour or against such a methodology. All I am

---

56 Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, p. 87.

57 Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (transl. Richard Miller), London: Jonathan Cape, 1975.

Peter Lamarque, "The Death of the Author: An Analytic Autopsy", in *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 30, (1990), p. 331, says that Barthes presses his technique "almost *ad absurdum*".

58 Roland Barthes, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives" in *Image, Music, Text,* 1977, p. 104.

arguing is that stories, considered *qua* stories, are used to make a story-world and that the story represents that world.

We find that Barthes, himself, starts to talk about stories and films as representing. Film is, he says, a way of *representing* (his italics) the action. "Representation," he says, "is not defined directly by imitation ... There will still be representation for so long as a subject (author, reader, spectator or voyeur) casts his *gaze* towards a horizon."[59] I have introduced structuralism at this point, as an example of a way of reading a text that denies that a text can represent a story-world; to a structuralist, texts represent some deep structure. Structuralists, such as Barthes, further argue that the notion of mimesis is outdated. I am suggesting that the shoe is on the other foot and that a structuralist reading is able to do some (interesting) things but cannot offer a satisfactory philosophical account of stories. Barthes seems to have already conceded the point.

Making the Story-World

We will spend most of the remainder of the thesis considering how this leading idea shows how we can make sense of stories. In subsequent chapters, we will see ways in which our responses to stories and the way we approach them can make sense. But already, we have a simple heuristic tool which answers some of the problems we have identified. I want to draw some preliminary conclusions now. This will allow us to see exactly what a story-world is. It will be necessary to draw further conclusions later and to refine and amplify these preliminary results.

---

59 Roland Barthes, "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein", in *Image, Music, Text*, 1977, p. 69.

A story-world is what a story represents and that world is, therefore, as the story (or the text) says it is. We do not need to treat the text of a story differently from the way we treat any other text; we read the story and we make the story-world as we do so. We understand the text of the story in the same way we understand any other text (say a newspaper article or a history text book). We must, of course, be aware that we are reading a story and we must make the appropriate world. If we take the story to be an accurate account of events in this world we may make a serious error; we will consider this problem further in chapter 4. As we make the story-world we are also making the entities which the story represents. As a very general rule, in doing that we take the author of the story to be telling the truth about events, places and people, although we will see, in the next chapter, that we need not always do that. We understand references to events, places and people just as we would such references in any other text. Those events occur within the story-world; those places are located within the story-world and those people exist within the story-world. When we read anything, we take it that circumstances are "normal", unless the text says otherwise. By "normal" I mean that grass is green, snow is white, it takes 12 or so hours to drive from Sydney to Melbourne and such like. We fill in this sort of detail (consistently with the story) when we read a text. We do the same when someone talks to us.

Some things, such as those just given, can be taken for granted. Other things that depart from "normal" would need to be indicated in the story if they are important to the story. We would need to be told that the grass was yellow if that were important. L. Frank Baum (in *The Wizard of Oz*) tells us that the road is yellow brick; therefore, it is. Jane Austen (in *Pride and Prejudice*) does not tell us what colour hair Elizabeth Bennet had, and it is not critical to the story. Therefore, we are free to fill in that detail if we wish; we are also free not to imagine her any way in particular. We do not expect Gregor Samsa (in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*) to turn into a beetle and, of course, we have to be told (by some means) that he has done so.

A story-world is not static. Events occur (those events described, or represented, by the text). This is, to put it simply, what we know as the plot. Characters develop: they have experiences and those experiences (may) change them. Places change: buildings rise and fall; plants grow and so forth. Many stories are more about the development of characters than they are about anything else. Stories which concentrate on character or even place may, of course, be legitimate stories. Character changes or changes to places are represented by the text as taking place, over time, within the story-world.

Statements made about the story-world, by readers, are simply that. They may be true or false, reasonable, likely or unlikely. If I say "Elizabeth Bennet married Darcy" that is a true statement if said about the Pride and Prejudice story-world (either overtly or by implication). If I say "She only married him for his money" that is false, for the text says otherwise. If I say "Elizabeth Bennet was a redhead" I can have no warrant from the text, for the text does not say. However, that suggestion is reasonable, and certainly does no violence to the text, but that is all we can say; we could not infer such information from what we are told.

In the next chapter I will consider interpretation and the effect of differing interpretations in particular. For now, we will notice that if someone takes a story and changes it in some manner, then we have a new story. The new story represents a different story-world from that represented by the original story. The definitions provided say nothing about the originality of the story. Some authors are highly imaginative and creative people; others are merely hacks. I must still, when I read the work of a hack, make the story-world. I will have more to say about such questions later.

For example, the story-world of Nahum Tate's revision of *King Lear* (where Cordelia survives and so forth) is a different world from that of Shakespeare's (original) story. This forces me to accept that even small changes to a story lead to different story-worlds. There are many versions of some stories (Cinderella, for

example). To the extent that these are all different, each version makes a different story-world. I have no difficulty accepting that conclusion. A rewrite of a story presents a different story and represents a different story-world (but one that is similar to the story-world of the original story). Taking a story and relocating the action also changes the story-world. A Shakespearean play presented in a modern location (say New York) presents a different story-world from that presented when Shakespeare originally presented the play. A producer of a play must make many interpretive decisions and these will all affect the finished production, which is a form of collaboration between the playwright (who may be dead) and the producer. We may question the apropos of some of these variants (and many people have questioned Nahum Tate's revision) but to do that is a different problem, relating to taste or some other aesthetic consideration, from our problem.

What of the simultaneous creation of two stories that are exactly alike? Again, in this unlikely event, we would have to say that the two authors have described the same story-world. I would prefer not to arrive at that conclusion, but I think that such events are rare (probably non-existent except in a trivial sense) and the conclusion is one that is of no substantial concern. Similarly, Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*, may represent the same story-worlds as the original plays. At least they do to the extent that Lamb's descriptions are faithful. He certainly tried to make them so, but his is an interpretation none the less. Conceptually a completely successful attempt to do this must be taken as representing the same story-world; I think that is a theoretical possibility. It is, practically, inevitable that the casting of a story into a different form, will cause some changes in the story-world. But there can be (and are) different representations of a thing; Lamb's Tales may be an example of that.

I will leave this line of argument at this point. We will touch on this material further when we come to comparing story-worlds and this world in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 2

Interpreting Worlds

We read the text of a story and we make a story-world from our reading. The act of making a story-world is an act of interpretation. To make a story-world, we must read and interpret the text, for the text represents the story-world. If we are unable to do that, we can make no sense of the text. Making a story-world from a text is, at least at a basic level of understanding, the interpreting of that text. We will, toward the end of this thesis, look at further ways of giving meaning to a text; we will do that when we consider texts as metaphorical devices. In this chapter we, therefore, want to consider the question of interpretation as a means of making the story-world. I will argue that any single text may be interpreted in, potentially, many different ways to arrive at different (and possibly incompatible) story-worlds. No single interpretation can be privileged.

A story-world may be a very complex place represented by a long and complex text. The plot may twist and turn, the characters may be complex (psychological) entities and the geography of that world may be difficult to understand. The act of making such a world may be difficult and complicated. To read the text and to make the story-world may be likened to visiting that world. We may give the text a close reading and enjoy our visit to the world savouring every detail. We may put a lot of effort and work into a visit. We need not do that; we may quickly survey the scene and be done with it. But, to read the story is already to be there. "To read a text or to look at a painting means", says Pavel, "already to inhabit

their worlds."[60] For to give the story any sense, is to make the world. We can immerse ourselves in that world (as observers) to a greater or lesser degree. In one sense the making of a story-world is difficult; in another it is very easy and natural — so easy and natural that we do it with hardly a thought. We will return to this point. However, we may abandon the attempt to make the world as too difficult or, in our opinion, not worth the effort (we throw the book away). We may quickly read a story giving the text less attention and effort than, perhaps, it deserves. This might mean that we do not "see" the world properly but, as just suggested, only glimpse it here and there. We may do the same to any scene; we do not and cannot pay careful attention to everything. Peter Lamarque states that this is all obvious. He points out that it is clear that "reading fiction requires active involvement: readers 'fill out' characters, draw implications, form hypotheses, and make judgments."[61]

Wolfgang Iser says that it is the reader who produces from, the text, the reality which is the story. The text, he says, "offers us guidance as to what is to be produced."[62] The reader does the producing or "synthesising"[63]. Iser continues by making the points above. "[T]he whole text", he says, "can never be perceived at any one time."[64] Reading is a serial activity; we are presented with a varying and constantly unfolding panorama, possibly from the different viewpoints of different characters. We must make the story-world, but it is a mistake to think that, once made, the whole world is retained and can be viewed, as it were, from some Olympian perspective. We forget details only, perhaps, to remember them later (maybe one of the characters reminds us of something). But we do the same with

---

60 Pavel, *Fictional Worlds*, p. 74.

61 Peter Lamarque, *Fictional Points of View,* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996, p. 19.

62 Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response,* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978, p. 107.

63 Ibid., p. 111.

64 Ibid., p. 108.

our experience of this world also. I will have more to say about that activity in the next chapter.

Some texts are vague or confusing and may only hint at the story-world. The world represented by Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*, is the room and its contents; what lies outside that room is only tantalisingly hinted at. We may feel that we are seeing the story-world through a fog or with a light on part, only, of the world (the contents of the room) and with the remainder obscured. We may read and reread the text to make the Endgame story-world. We may make the story-world one way and, I will suggest, later decide on a different way of making it (which we might prefer). We may make the story-world in several different ways and hold the different worlds in some sort of suspended state without deciding on any particular world. That is to say, we may refuse to decide between conflicting possibilities but visit the different worlds in turn.

We cannot approach a text with a blank mind. We will already be predisposed to treat the text in certain ways by our background knowledge of the text or the author, by things we have heard about the story, our understanding of this world, our experience of this world and so forth. We may make the story-world in a particular fashion because of certain stylistic considerations to be found within the text itself. Such "literary" considerations are, in general, outside the scope of this thesis, but we cannot completely ignore them.

In this thesis, we are considering the reader's reaction to the story-text. But, should that reader be looking for the (one) right interpretation of a text and set out to make the right story-world? I will argue that we must interpret any text within its own terms; we are not free to interpret a text just anyway. There must be some limits to how it is to be interpreted. We cannot interpret *Endgame* as describing a train journey from Sydney to Melbourne; that would do violence to the text itself. That claim seems right, but can we go the next step and say that there is only one correct interpretation, and that any interpretations, other than that one, are wrong?

Many people argue that there is only one correct interpretation, and that is the interpretation that the author of the text intended. That would, at least, rule out apparently legitimate interpretations because they depart from the author's intention, without necessarily seeming out of order with the text itself. As a result only one, or a small family of related, interpretations would count as correct. This is a question Gary Iseminger asks, in the preface to a collection of essays on this topic: "[w]hat is the connection, if any, between the author's intentions in (while) writing a work of literature and the truth (acceptability, validity) of interpretive statements about it?"[65] he asks. He continues, drawing the battle lines between the older view represented by Wimsatt and Beardsley which says there is no connection and the more recent view presented by E. D. Hirsch claiming that a work means what the author intended. The debate between these two is characterised by Dickie and Wilson as follows:

> Beardsley claims that combinations of words can have a specific meaning independently of anyone's intention. Hirsch claims that combinations of words can not have a specific meaning unless that meaning is intended by the author and further that an author's intention determines the meaning his combinations of words can have.[66]

Put thus, Hirsch's thesis seems improbable but the suggestion that a text means what its author intended might seem, on the surface, to be attractive, particularly if it is not possible to determine just one meaning for a given text.

However, I will argue that a text can have many legitimate meanings and that it is not possible to restrict its meaning to just one possibility (even if the author did intend just that one particular meaning). In the next chapter, I will mount a similar case for suggesting that there are (potentially) many legitimate ways of seeing the

---

65 Gary Iseminger (ed.), *Intention and Interpretation,* Philadelphia, NY: Temple University Press, 1992. preface, p ix.

66 George Dickie, and Kent Wilson, "The Intentional Fallacy: Defending Beardsley", in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 53, (1995), p. 235.

world. When I suggest that there are many legitimate possibilities for interpreting a text (or understanding the world), that is because, partly, there is no way of legitimising any given interpretation over any other. Hirsch argues that there is such a way: namely, the way the author intended (but, possibly failed to make clear). It does not follow, from my argument, that just any interpretation must be given credence and, neither, does it follow that all texts have multiple interpretations. There are probably a great many texts which can only be understood in one (general) way without doing violence to the text itself. Many texts are clear and seemingly explicit. But not all. Where the text is not clear and explicit, a space for multiple interpretations opens.

In order to better approach this question I want, firstly, to indicate briefly what an interpretation is and then to consider possible interpretations of a particular work, Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*. Then we can return to the general question of interpretation.

What is an Interpretation?

Iseminger suggests that we indicate an interpretation of a work, by making further statements about that work.[67] In this chapter we will consider interpretations that are expressed as statements about a story. We read a story and, unless the text is to be just a jumble of sounds (as it might be if we are reading a language we do not understand), we interpret what we have read to make a story-world. That is what it is to understand the story-text *qua* story. When we interpret a work, we say things about that work. Of course, some such statements are evaluative (that

---

67 Iseminger, *Intention and Interpretation,* editor's introduction, p. 1

is to say are broadly about the aesthetics of the work) but some are about the story-world. It is these latter that are to hold our interest here.

We represent the world of the work by, *inter alia*, symbolising that world in words. That is what it is to write a story (to write words that represent, in some manner, the story-world).[68] We might interpret a work by drawing a picture (as an illustrator of books might) or by some other symbolising means. But, here, I will limit the discussion to interpretations made using words. What I say in terms of interpretation couched in words could be extended to include other forms of interpretation and I am not intending to exclude other interpretive mechanisms as possibilities. It is more convenient and less prolix to simply consider word-based interpretations. This is, of course, how school teachers and university professors test interpretation of literary (and other) works. They set comprehension tests and require students to submit essays.

Comprehension tests are marked as incorrect if the student provides an answer which is incompatible with the text to be comprehended.[69] University essays may be credited with more or less insight and appreciation of the text. This leads professors to award different grades for work. Many essayists are required to go beyond the making of the story-world of a work and apply that work in some way or to make comparisons. Such activities, while valid, go, as we have noted, beyond the task of making the story-world.

The most basic (but perhaps not the simplest) interpretation of a text that one can offer is simply the text itself.[70] If I am asked what is the meaning of a work, I may

---

68 I would not want this very generalised claim to be interpreted to mean that a story-world is (fully) conceived by an author and then the text inscribed. Obviously authors often write in ways other than that.

69 Or they may be marked more narrowly than that.

70 Not everyone will agree that to, merely, repeat a text is a (form of) interpretation. They would argue that the interpreter must alter the text or

respond by quoting the text of that work verbatim. It would be difficult to dispute that I have, indeed, given the meaning (that is to say, a suitable interpretation) of that text by so doing. However, I may respond by making one or more statements, which discuss or, somehow, describe the work in question.

I want to base this discussion around an interpretive question that arises when we consider Henry James' short novel, *The Turn of the Screw*. In order to place this discussion in a context, I will make a short detour through some of the possibilities that this work raises. The purpose of that detour is not to present a scholarly analysis of James' story nor to argue a case for any particular interpretation, but to illustrate the argument I wish to present.

The Turn of the Screw

James first published *The Turn of the Screw* in 1898 and revised it for the definitive edition published in 1908. The story contains a number of ambiguities: for example, the dialogue may be read in different ways. It also contains several unanswered questions: for example, we never really find out what Miles did at school, to result in the children's being under the care of the governess. This lack of conclusion in the text, opens that text up to different interpretive possibilities, as critics and the "ordinary reader" try to supply (and justify) answers to these, and other, questions.[71] The answers or, at least, the sorts of answers, we give to such questions will have a great bearing on how we understand the text, that is to say, on how we make the story-world.

---

say something about it. This is a point that I will pass over, as it does not impact my discussion.

71 Of course, answers supplied by the reader to fill a hiatus in the text need not be complete; they may be vague but suggestive.

Many readers allow their understanding of the real world to colour their reading of a text. This is not an error on the part of the reader but necessary, for we cannot approach a text with a blank mind and expect to make anything at all from that text. If a reader does not think there are ghosts in the real world, that reader may read *The Turn of the Screw* in such a manner as to discount the existence of ghosts in their The Turn of the Screw story-world (although to admit ghosts to that world is not to admit them into this world). Other readers will not be troubled by an interpretation, which populates the story-world with ghosts. In either case, we know what sorts of things ghosts are, yet we must allow any ghosts in the story to be as the story says (however that may be).

We do, of course, see the Turn of the Screw story-world as, in many ways, like this world: we take it for granted that, for example, night follows day in the Turn of the Screw story-world as it does in this world. We can have no warrant for thinking otherwise.

The story of *The Turn of the Screw* is told to us indirectly. It is told by the children's governess (now deceased) but comes to us via her papers; she wrote the story after the events related occurred. We have, therefore, only the governess' word for any of the events that make up the story as no other witness to those events is introduced. We may choose to treat the governess as a reliable narrator or we may decide not to do so.

When we read a story, or anything else, we tend to believe what we are told. Our friends tell us something and we take it at face value. Usually we believe what we are told but, occasionally, we do not do that; we may not trust the teller or what we are told may seem wrong or not consistent. There are many reasons not to believe what we are told. Similarly, when we read a story, we are inclined to take the text at face value. This is usually reasonable. But we must always decide whether to believe what we are told. So, our first inclination may be to take the *Turn of the Screw* story as read, treating the governess, who is effectively, the

narrator, as reliable. It is not wrong to do that. But, we may decide not to believe what she says and consider her words with great care (such a decision may arise from our reading). That would not be wrong either but a decision to do that could not be arbitrarily taken. As I have just said, we believe what we are told, unless we have (good) reason not to.

This leads directly to the two broad interpretive schemes that have been applied to this story: in one the governess is taken to be reliable, and in the other she is taken to be deranged.[72] Most interpreters and casual readers take the story to be a ghost story. The ghosts are the (real) ghosts of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel. Many interpretations take it that the ghosts of Quint and Jessel have come to take the children away, drag them down to perdition. Quint and Miss Jessel had, when alive, some awful hold over the children and are now attempting to drag them down (presumably, in order to possess them again, as they did when they were alive). If the governess is believed, the ghosts are real; such interpretations are classified as apparitionist.

Eli Siegel[73] takes an apparitionist approach, considering the governess' description of events as, more or less, accurate. On Siegel's account, the story is a "ghost" story. It is a tale of possession but, for him, it is the children who do the possessing: they possess Quint and Jessel and will not let them go, even after they have died. The children are, he argues, the source of evil. James describes the children as sweet and beautiful precisely because we do not expect sweet, beautiful, innocent children to be the source of such evil. Their evil is that they see other people as contemptible. The universe exists to be held in contempt. The children have conjured up the ghosts of their former companions because their

---

72 There are other views. For example, E. A. Sheppard, in *Henry James and The Turn of the Screw*, Aukland: Aukland University Press, 1974, suggests that the governess is telling it as she saw it, but that the ghosts are a result of her reading of the children's minds.

73 Eli Siegel, *James and the Children: A Consideration of Henry James's The Turn of the Screw,* New York: Definition Press, 1968.

contempt will allow no surcease. Even when dead, Quint and Jessel "exist" to be contemptible (to the children).

On the other hand, Cranfill and Clark[74] present a nonapparitionist view. There are no ghosts, they say. They characterise the apparitionist view as "lazy".[75] For them, the governess is in the grip of a neurotic obsession or worse. They characterise her as insane. Her discussions with Mrs. Grose are carefully analysed and seen in a quite different light from the way the governess, herself, seems to understand them. Mrs. Grose never sees the ghosts. The children never admit to seeing them, but the governess asseverates that they must do so and are lying when they say they do not. That claim will not be conclusive if we think the governess is deranged.

The worlds presented by these two commentators are very different and both horrifying. Siegel's world where the children are evil is a terrible prospect. Cranfill's sick and claustrophobic world where the governess cloisters and terrifies the children, ultimately, in Miles' case, to death, is equally horrible. Both commentators weave their cases with great ingenuity. Cranfill's case sounds convincing, until one reads Siegel, and vice versa. There are, as I have suggested, other readings possible also.

So who is correct? One of these commentators or someone else with a variant on one of these schemes? Or some other scheme altogether? Perhaps something straight forward? But what is "straight forward"? Are we to say that Cranfield's interpretation is, in some way, not "straight forward" where Siegel's is? Or is the reverse the case? If we attempt to make either of those claims, how are we to

---

74 Thomas Mabry Cranfill and Robert Lanier Clark Jr., *An Anatomy of The Turn of the Screw,* Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1965.

75 Ibid., p5, quoting Edna Kenton.

justify the claim? And, how are we to decide?[76] There seems to be no definitive warrant, either in the story or external to it. Had James indicated that he wrote against one intention[77] would that be sufficient to close the case? Hirsch would say "yes" while Wimsatt would say "no". We can already see that we compound difficulties if we attempt to say, from the text alone, that one interpretive scheme is "correct" and the other "wrong."

We want, as I have said, to restrict our discussion to interpretations, which are sentential. We have conducted this brief investigation using sentences. But let us take a simplified approach to our question. We will consider the sentences:

r: "the ghosts in *The Turn of the Screw* are real (that is, real in the story-world)." This sentence would be affirmed by Siegel but denied by Cranfill.

n: "the ghosts in *The Turn of the Screw* are not real." This sentence would be affirmed by Cranfill but denied by Siegel.

T: (we will take to be) the text.

Statements r and n are not compatible and few people would wish to assert T & r & n. Cranfill would assert T & n while Siegel would assert T & r. But James wrote T. If he wanted to write T & r (say) he did not do so. This is an important observation.

Many statements could be made about the story-world (infinitely many). Some of these can be dismissed as not compatible with the text. To say, for example, that "the governess was a haggard old crone" would be to make an error, for the text explicitly denies this. It suggests that she was "young and pretty" and flatly states

---

76 It will become apparent that I think both interpretations can be called "correct" (a term I would prefer not to use), for both are reasonable interpretations of the text.

77 He did not. In fact both commentator's attempt, unsuccessfully, to enlist James in support of their case.

that she was about twenty. The text may seem to say that there were ghosts. Yet Cranfill constructs a T-world (namely, in part at least, T & n) where there are no ghosts but an insane governess. He puts great effort into making that world consistent, and consistent within itself and with the text.

Interpreting T

When I read Cranfill or Siegel, I am, of course, not reading T but something else (which bears some relation to T). If I read T & r, that is not reading T. Now, as I have said, James could have written T & r, but he did not do so. He wrote T.

Let us suppose that James would affirm T & r and deny T & n and that we know this. Does that knowledge give us a warrant for saying that T & n is a wrong interpretation of T? That knowledge may cause us to gloss T as T & r rather than just T. We may do that without even realising it, for we have come to read T against expectations. But the question is: must we do that? Since James wrote T, there seems to be no reason why we cannot make the story world as the T & n story-world. My argument is as simple as that. We must always come to a text with some expectations and those expectations will, necessarily, prejudice how we read that text. Those expectations may arise from a reading of the introduction or a commentary or the author's correspondence or what we know of other works by that author or what we think about the world in general.

It is possible that James did not have an intention either way. Then, there would be two radically different interpretations both consistent with the author's (non) intention. I suspect that situation is quite common, and I further suspect that is, in fact, the situation with James' story. I know of nothing James has said that sheds specific light on this particular work. It is quite possible that I may know, or think

I know, the author's general intention but choose to make a very different reading (one that I could be confident that the author would repudiate). There does not seem to be anything illegitimate in that. Why should we privilege the author's supposed intentions when they do not form (but could have formed) part of the text? If we take such additional material into account we are working with something wider than (just) the story-text and interpreting something which is not the story-text. It is hardly possible that I could interpret something such as *The Epic of Gilgamesh* according to the author's intention.

I am arguing that we have a text and if we read just that text, we can make of it what we will, consistently with the text. Texts do not come without baggage. This is true of all sentential messages. My argument is simply this. To read a text against something (be it the author's known intention or some commentary) is to read the text plus something else. James wrote T. To read T is to read T and not, say T & r. The appeals that Siegel and Cranfill make to other texts of James or to his correspondence, are appeals that go beyond the text[78] and, thus, add something to it; although, in this particular case, that material is hardly definitive. Doing this might be likened to taking a painting and outlining parts of it in order to highlight or to clarify something that the painter has left obscure; in James' case obscure or indeterminate seems to be a significant feature of this work.

Thus, there can be no right answer to the question which asks "which (one) is the correct interpretation?" The different worlds that Siegel and Cranfill make from this particular text are both possible and validly made from that text.[79] It is even

---

78 To look forward to the argument of chapter 3, we might, here, note that to appeal to the author as to the meaning of the text, is like appealing to the author about the meaning of our experience of the world. In other words, it has the metaphysical quality of asking how God perceives the world. On the basis of this analogy, God's perception or intentions would be definitive.

79 This is a version of Quine's famous argument about the problem of radical translation. See W. V. O. Quine, *Word and Object*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960.

possible to argue that one of the characteristics of a good text is that it opens up many possibilities for the creation of worlds. I have much sympathy with such an argument but that possibility is beyond the scope of this thesis and must be left aside.

We must always bring something to a text; we always do outline the painting. We are not a *tabula rasa* waiting for the text to inscribe its message. The something we bring to the text is necessary if we are to interpret that text at all. We must be able to build the world of the text. If we could not understand madness and obsession, if we did not ourselves exhibit petty petulancies and follies, we could never understand Cranfield's interpretation. If we could not understand that children might be anything but angelic, we could not understand Siegel's. How our (individual) world is and how our experience has made that world, may lead us to reject a particular interpretation (even the author's) and make the world differently.

Some writers argue that a text must be fully consistent. Of course, we try to make the story-world so that the world so made is consistent; we make it to be consistent with how we read the text and also consistent, within the framework of the story, with how things generally are. But we cannot know if we have succeeded completely. Probably, no author has sufficient capacity to succeed completely either (unless the story is very simple). We simply roll with inconsistencies. That, as we will see, presents this thesis with no serious difficulty. It is quite likely that many texts (and particularly very complex texts) are not internally fully consistent; it is hardly conceivable that they could be. At this stage of our work, we will set this issue aside and return to the whole question of consistency when we consider the "real" world in chapter 3. We will then revisit the question of consistency in a story-world in chapter 4.

We have argued on the basis that both r and n are compatible with the text, T. But this may not be so. It may be that r is incompatible with some things in T and n is

incompatible with others. This could lead to a situation where no single completely compatible interpretation is possible. The thesis, as discussed above, admits that interpretations might be incompatible with each other but requires any acceptable interpretation to be compatible with the text. This last requirement must now be weakened to, at least, accommodate this problem.

An interpretation which is more compatible with a text may have, *prima facie*, a greater claim to acceptance than one which is less compatible. But even this sort of claim presents new difficulties. How are we to say what is "more compatible"? Most of us would hold that some inconsistencies are such as to invalidate a complete interpretive scheme, while other inconsistencies are not sufficient to produce such a result. If this is so, determining a level of compatibility is not simply a matter of counting differences (as if that were possible). In any case, a more complex (and comprehensive) interpretation may have greater "power", despite being less consistent with the text than an interpretation which may seem to be more compatible in the sense suggested. An interpretation may not be the worse for being less consistent.

Nevertheless, we usually demand that an interpretation of a work be (reasonably) consistent and most readers would not countenance an erratic interpretation.[80] Even in the most banal situations, our utterances must form a reasonably consistent system. If we were not consistent, it would not be possible to interpret our sayings and ordinary communication would become impossible; the sounds we make would be just babblings and the marks just random scribblings. But it is possible that we would prefer an interpretation with (some) inconsistencies to one that has none at all (supposing that were even possible).

The n-version of T has, at least, one serious difficulty. The prologue (which most interpreters take it is to be believed) where the governess' story is introduced, says

that the governess was "the most agreeable person ... in her position; she would have been worthy of any whatever."[81] There are, on the other hand, suggestions that the reader should be discerning. Jeff Williams suggests that we should pay more attention than is common to the framing story.[82] This story is about a group of characters trying to outdo each other with a scary story. In that context, it is easy to suggest that Douglas would exaggerate such things to give his turn in the game of telling scary stories, more impact. Thus, the prologue, itself, may introduce new problems into our understanding of the story-world. But, we must leave this specific question here; it is not necessary for us to come to a conclusion as to the best interpretive strategy for this story. That was not the purpose of the above discussion. It is likely that there is no way of resolving such conflicting interpretations and the reader must make a choice (or decide not to settle for any single interpretation). We will have a little more to say about this prologue in a later chapter, but we will not shed any more light on this particular interpretive question.

---

80 Such as the American Woman's interpretation of *Macbeth* in James Thurber, "The Macbeth Murder Mystery", in James Thurber, *The Thurber Carnival*, New York: Harper and Row, 1945, pp. 60-63.

81 Henry James, "The Turn of the Screw" in *The Turn of the Screw and Other Short Novels,* New York: Signet, 1995, p. 293.

82 Jeff Williams, "Narrative Games: The Frame of *The Turn of the Screw*", in *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, 28, (1998), pp. 43-55.

Opposing Views

Wimsatt and Beardsley in a well-known essay[83] argued that the text stands alone and that the author's intentions are not relevant to the interpretation of a work. "[T]he judgement of poems is", they say, "different from the art of producing them."[84] The work is an icon because it stands apart and is to be judged on its own merits and not on the basis of some imputed authorial intention. Of course, they point to the enormous and sometimes insuperable difficulties in determining just what the intentions of an author might have been. Most commentators agree that the plays of Aeschylus are very great works with meaning for us today. If their meaning were restricted to an arcane intention of their author, they would not be what they are. At best, they would be of interest to scholars of antiquities. If we go back further, say to The Bible or *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, what then of authorial intention?

Opposed to this approach, a modern school has arisen arguing that the author's intentions must be (part of) the meaning of any work. Gregory Currie says that, at least, an author must have some communicative intention in writing a story. "Fiction is", he says, "essentially connected with the idea of communication."[85] Currie continues by presenting a Gricean account of communication. Noël Carroll puts a stronger position and claims that "[w]hen we read a literary text ... we enter a relationship with its creator that is roughly analogous to a conversation."[86] He then goes on to argue that the purpose of a conversation is for the parties to

---

83 W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy", in W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry*, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1954.

84 Ibid., p. 9.

85 Currie, *The Nature of Fiction*, p. 24.

86 Noël Carroll, "Art, Intention, and Conversation", in Gary Iseminger, *Intention and Interpretation*, 1992, p. 117.

understand the intentions of the other parties to that conversation. This being so, we should adopt the same approach to literature, for there is no reason to say that "artworks ... should be interpreted differently from ordinary words or actions."[87]

This thesis certainly agrees that there is no special usage of language in art works (even poems use language in fairly normal ways). Currie's claim that a story is an act of communication is also reasonable; an author communicates a story to her readers. We have previously noted that Currie's theory is author-oriented where ours is reader-oriented. However, there are differences between a story and a conversation. The communicative act carried out in a novel (or a university lecture), is very different from that conducted in a conversation. The detailed Gricean account of meaning, even if appropriate to a normal conversation (and I am not saying that it is) is not compatible with the claims we are making. We communicate many things in many ways, not all of them intended. I can communicate my anger or disappointment, against my desire to do so. All we can really say is that the communicative act of the author is to tell a story. Communication is a very general idea. If we want to communicate something specific we need to choose our words with care. Politicians and diplomats know this to their cost.

In fact we often do consider our words with some care. I say something and you seem to have misunderstood, so I rephrase what I have said. I may say something and, on brief reflection, realise that what I have said may not convey my intentions accurately. I then resay it but phrasing my sentences differently so as to ensure a greater likelihood of having my words understood in the manner in which I intended that they be understood. As a general rule, you can only understand my intentions from what I say. The onus is on me to make those clear.

If we consider Carroll's paradigm and take a conversation of the sort he envisages, we immediately see a difference between such a conversation and a literary work.

---

87 Ibid., 102.

A conversation is a form of dialectic where the parties enter into a to and fro, in order to reach some kind of understanding. We misunderstand and rephrase sentences so that our hearer will divine our intentions. We may well hope to convey those intentions by the sentences we utter, but our hearer is not wrong to misunderstand. In a conversation where matters are important to the parties to that conversation, the interchange of discourse (usually) continues until those parties conclude that they have interpreted the sentences alike, or think they have, for we can never be certain that is the case. But we do not always continue until a common understanding is arrived at. Therefore, we must reject Carroll's paradigm

A literary work stands alone and must be understood on its own terms; this is why Wimsatt and Beardsley call it an "icon". A conversation may be a dialogue but a story is a soliloquy. A story is produced and, thereafter, has an existence, independent of its author. This is true of many situations; it is not unique to stories. Road signs and sermons have to fend for themselves in the same way. The author of the *Oresteia* is not engaged in a conversation; his voice is stopped and we must get on as well as we can, overhearing his soliloquy. Since we see the world somewhat differently from the way he saw it, we might expect that our understanding and his intentions would not coincide precisely. How accurately do we have to understand the author's intentions before we are considered to have a "correct" interpretation?

In a conversation, if we think our hearer does not understand, or we feel that we have not adequately conveyed our intentions, we will say more; repeat or rephrase and so on, as I have suggested. We may, on reflection, feel that we have not accurately conveyed our intentions but have said enough for our purpose. We allow the matter to lapse. Henry James has left us with a lot more that could be said, for he seems to have deliberately left much unsaid. We may imagine what we might ask if we were engaged in a conversation with him. We would probably ask about Miles' activities at school. Perhaps he would not answer our questions.

Perhaps he could not answer our questions. The claim that the "true" meaning is that which the author intended depends upon the author's having some sort of intention, and, furthermore, an intention that he wanted to fully convey in the written work. He or she may not have had such an intention at all. I suspect that this is a quite common situation. If the author had no (particular) intention, would that imply that the story has no (particular) meaning? Perhaps there must be, at least, a rudimentary intention on the part of the author? Suppose that James intended us to guess what Miles did at school, but we guess wrongly. Suppose, further, that we have otherwise understood the story as he intended. Would we then have a "correct" interpretation or would we still be "wrong?" There is always going to be such a credibility gap.

The protagonists of the anti-intentionalist camp point out that it is difficult (and sometimes impossible) to know what the author intended. They also point out that intentions alone cannot determine the case. If a sculptor creates a blue sculpture and declares that he intended it to be pink, it does not thereby become pink. Carroll's answer to this is to say that "with cases where the authorial pronouncement is so arbitrary, we may discount it ... because we think the report is insincere."[88] To decide that the author is insincere is already to interpret the object and to back one's own interpretation against the stated intention of the author. The only basis on which one could decide that the author is insincere is the work itself. If we judge it to be blue and the author says it is pink, we are backing our interpretation against his. His stated intention seems unreasonable; in this example, we say it is bizarre. But this is merely an extreme. Even this example may not be so extreme as at first it seems. Most works require some technical machinery and that may fail the artist. A painter may have intended a colour mix to come out green but it is blue. In the ceramic arts, failure can arise from conditions in the kiln. It is, indeed, possible to create a blue sculpture when one intended that work to be pink! The sculpture is, notwithstanding the sincere

---

88 Carroll, "Art, Intention, and Conversation", p. 99.

intentions of the creator, blue. Language is a sophisticated tool and its machinery may, in like manner, fail.

We read a work and interpret it. If we have access to other material (perhaps, in the case of a novel, the introduction to the work or some scholarly, or not-so-scholarly, commentary or the author's stated intentions) it may be that we take that material into account when interpreting the work. A case in point is Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan*; Shaw provides quite a long preface to this play. He argues, in this preface, that Saint Joan was, effectively, the first Protestant, that she received a fair trial at the hands of Bishop Peter Cauchon, and that she was condemned for putting her own opinion above that of the Church (this is why Shaw calls her a Protestant). There is much more in Shaw's preface and it was written to be published with the play. Therefore, the preface forms part of the text. It would be difficult not to be influenced by this material. One could argue that a preface, while part of the published work, is not part of the story-text, and ignore it. One probably would not take that course, but many readers do not read prefatory material.

As we say, the reader may take such material into account, but he is not obliged to do so. Neither is it wrong to be influenced by such material. If James says that *The Turn of the Screw* is a polemic against the British class system (a position that has, at least in part, been adopted by some critics) we are not, thereby, obliged to read it that way. If he says it is about transport in early nineteenth century England, we may just dismiss his claim by considering the text. If he says it is about intergalactic travel, we would consider that he was joking.

We must also recognise that the author (may have) made a careful judgment not to include certain material into the text. The question of Miles' activities is tantalising but James never tells. We must suppose that the suppression of this information was a deliberate matter on James' part (or else, that he did not know the answer) or just gave it no thought. The way the question is handled in the text

leads one to suppose that its omission is, in fact, deliberate. James is a very careful writer and he almost certainly chose his method of presenting the story with great care. It is, in this example, the very method of presentation which opens the story up to opposing interpretations. It is, thus, possible, even probable, that James' intention was to leave the text open. That would not mean that James did not have his own interpretation. It would mean that James did not intend the reader to, necessarily, see the story-world in the same way. In that case, to insist on just one (family of) interpretation would be to do violence to James's artistic intent. James chose to present the text as he did and we can only read and interpret what we have.

We have already seen that we can suppress details in any conversation. Indeed, in some commonsense manner, we must do that, for we could never tell all about anything. One of the tasks of the critic is to draw our attention to factors and connections among and between texts; to point to intertextualities in order to aid our understanding and deepen our appreciation. We must always bring something to any text or any conversation. We have our experience to bring and we necessarily bring that. If we were not able to share our common humanity with the author, the text would be opaque and could have no meaning for us. In a similar manner, conversation can fail because the conversants have no point of contact.

But, let us suppose that the author has left a commentary on a work. A scholar studying that work, would certainly want to read that commentary. But the commentary would, let us suppose, be in writing. The commentary itself would now need interpretation. Perhaps the author has left a commentary on the commentary, and so forth. Of course more writing on a work would probably allow us to approach ever closer to the author's supposed intention. As a general rule, the more said (unless it is said to deliberately mislead) the greater the likelihood of an accurate understanding of the author's intention on the part of the

reader. It remains true that we cannot escape interpretation; we must always interpret.

Knapp and Michaels[89] claim to have a knock-down argument to say that, at least, intention is required if a saying is to have any meaning at all. They then proceed to identify meaning with intention claiming that the meaning a saying has is precisely its author's intention. Their argument is as follows (roughly): Suppose that, walking along the seashore, one noticed that the waves wrote, upon the sand, a stanza from Wordsworth. One would either ascribe intention to some agent (perhaps the sea itself, or the spirit of Wordsworth operating through the sea's tides and waves) or attribute the phenomenon to an amazing coincidence. In the latter case, they say, one would sadly conclude that, after all, the words were meaningless. But why would one have to conclude that the words were meaningless?

This "knock-down" argument assumes what it sets out to prove: namely, that intention is required for meaning. If we take it that the reader may supply the meaning, the problem disappears (the probability of such an unlikely event is, of course, unaffected by this; such an event would truly be an amazing occurrence). We do not normally search through random notations for meaning; experience suggests that it is not worth our while. It is usually more productive to look in a library. Gadamer observes, in a different context, that we look for meaning when and where we expect to find it.[90]

---

89 Steven Knapp and Walter Benn Michaels, "The Impossibility of Intentionless Meaning", in Gary Iseminger, *Intention and Interpretation*, 1992, pp. 51-64.

90 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* 2nd rev. edn. (transl. and rev. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald C. Marshall), New York: Continuum Publishing, 1999, p. 167, p. 294.

There is a counter example to Knapp and Michaels argument. The Ern Malley hoax is well known. Late in 1942 "two mediocre traditionalist poets"[91] James McAuley and Harold Stewart cobbled together a patchwork of words from a variety of sources and submitted it to a journal called *Angry Penguins,* which specialised in publishing "modernist" work. Their purpose was mischievous and aimed to debunk a style of writing of which they disapproved. The pastiche works were, on their reckoning, meaningless rubbish. Knapp and Michaels would, surely, agree. The works were published and the publisher embarrassed when the hoax was revealed. The point of interest to us is not the ensuing public scandal but, rather, the current status of these poems. They are, admittedly, difficult to understand but are frequently recognised as having considerable literary merit. Harris and Kerr observe that "Ern Malley lives. He has been read, studied and discussed in schools and universities throughout the years ... because it is believed that the poetry stands alone."[92] People, even knowing the genesis of these works, are still prepared and able to argue that they have meaning and are worthwhile works of art.

This thesis is concerned with the reader and his reaction to the story. Ultimately the source of the meaning of a story must lie with the reader; the reader understands the story and gives the work a meaning (by making a story-world). But it is the story-text the reader reads, as we have said. It is from the text that the reader understands the story *qua* story. Of course there are many other activities that the reader can carry out with a text. He can subject the work to an aesthetic evaluation taking into account many diverse sources and making many sophisticated comparisons. He can use it to cast light on events or people (such as the author). There is no suggestion that such activities are, in some sense, illicit. They are quite legitimate. But they go beyond the activities we are concerned with

---

91 Samela Harris and Sheryl Lee Kerr, "Ern Malley Official Website", http://www.ernmalley.com/index.html, 3/11/2003. Details about this incident are drawn from this source.

because they go beyond the text and beyond the understanding of the story. An aesthetic evaluation of a text almost certainly requires that the critic unravel the story and make a story-world. But this sort of critical activity goes beyond the making of a story-world. The comparative evaluation of story alternatives has already gone well beyond the text. Usually we do none of those things; we just enjoy the story.

Gregory Currie observes that we do, at least, amend a text when it contains an "obvious mistake."[93] He suggests that an "obvious mistake" is something not in conformity with the author's intentions; that is to say, an authorial error where the author intended to write some other word or spell a word some other way. He points out that we do not amend the capitalisation of e. e. cummings. But, of course, he is right, editors do amend (that is to say correct) texts. They do it in order to provide an authentic text. An authentic text is not what the author intended to write — that is unrecoverable — but one which can be understood by the modern reader, or is believed to be as the author first wrote it, or finalised it.[94] In the case of an old text, or a text which has undergone many revisions, this can require considerable research and sophisticated decision making on the part of editors. Increasingly, we note a reluctance to alter the text.[95] to bring it into line with the author's supposed intentions in writing that text. Modern editorial practice is to limit such corrections to obvious errors (grammar or spelling). When the text is difficult (or impossible) to understand, editors do alter word order or replace apparently aberrant words, to provide a text that can be (easily)

---

92 Ibid.

93 Gregory Currie, *An Ontology of Art*, London: Macmillan Press, 1989, p. 91.

94 After all, even the process of converting a manuscript text to a typographical one, involves a form of editing. The typographical text looks very different from the manuscript.

95 Although modern Biblical criticism may be a case where extensive changes are made. They are made, not to reflect an intention, but to return to a text which is believed to be closer to the originally inscribed text.

understood. This is done, not so much as to reflect the author's intentions as to ensure that the text is consistent and understandable. Most editors are careful to note such alterations. Currie continues by observing that, if we want to appraise the extent of the author's success, we must do so against the author's intentions.[96] That is incontrovertible; however, to gauge the extent of the author's success is a critical activity.[97] The critical question of asking if, for example, Aescylus succeeded in his intentions with *The Oresteia*, would be very difficult and, probably, impossible to answer.

As we have been arguing, since there are many readers, a text can have many meanings. The intentionalist school is seeking the one definitive meaning for any text (or saying). As we have already observed, this is to take a Gricean stance on meaning.[98] Currie acknowledges that. Yet we often say what we do not mean. The author, in the end, may not even be the best interpreter of his text; this is a commonplace, but, if the authorial meaning argument were right, this could not be so. Hermann Hesse concedes: "Poetic writing can be understood and misunderstood in many ways. In most cases the author is not the right authority to decide ... Many an author has found readers to whom his work seemed more lucid than it was to himself."[99] Michael Worton attributes similar sentiments to Samuel Beckett, although he goes on to suggest that Beckett's adherence to this principle was ambivalent. He quotes Beckett as suggesting that "'[t]he key word in my plays is "perhaps".'"[100]

---

96 Currie, *An Ontology of Art*, p. 92.

97 Currie's concern with this aspect of a work arises from his approach to stories as speech acts. Then the question of success (was the speech act successful) arises.

98 Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.

99 Hermann Hesse, *Steppenwolf* (transl. Basil Creighton, rev. Walter Sorell), London: Penguin Books, 1988, author's Note, p. 5.

100 Michael Worton, "*Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*: Theatre as Text", in John Pilling, *The Cambridge Companion to Beckett*, 1994, p. 67.

The modern intentionalist argument owes its origins to E. D. Hirsch and his book, *Validity in Interpretation.*[101] In this book, Hirsch distinguishes meaning from significance (or application). A work can have, for Hirsch, only one meaning, but it can have many applications. It can be significant, for different readers, in many ways that the author could not have expected. We will look at what I take to be Hirsch's idea of application towards the end of this work. He is suggesting that *Hamlet* can have only one meaning; the story of the Danish Prince etc. Yet we might apply this story in various ways to our own lives or to politics (as well as many other areas of life). We might see the play as about prevarication and then apply the story to political life arguing that it shows that decisive action is required on the political front. On the other hand, we might say the play is about a young man who is unsure of himself. Not that he prevaricates, knowing what to do but deferring action; rather this young man knows what to do but lacks the courage and resources to actually carry out his plan. We might then apply the story by claiming that only the tough should get involved in politics. We might say that we all need to have goals and behave decisively.

But these two readings are inconsistent: prevarication versus uncertainty. To interpret the work one way is to make the Hamlet story-world one way: namely, with a prince who prevaricates. To interpret the story the other way is to make the Hamlet story-world with a prince who is unsure. These worlds are different, so only, at most, one of these meanings can be correct, which is to say, in accord with the intentions of the author. Since one application flows from one meaning and the other application from the other meaning, only one of the applications suggested above could be acceptable; the other would be invalid.

To make matters even more difficult, it is possible that Shakespeare had no particular intention in this matter. If there is no intention on the part of the author, does this leave the play without meaning or with large holes in its meaning? If we

---

101 E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation,* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967.

need to know the author's intention to judge the meaning of a work, we must be forever uncertain and unable to specify any meaning, for we can never know. It seems clear that, in the case of this example, either application is a legitimate way of "reading" the play, that is, of making the Hamlet story-world. Of course, when a play is performed, the director has already made her own interpretation and this becomes part of the play-as-performed. When we see it performed, we must still interpret what we see and hear but that is not the same as interpreting the play from the text alone.

Hirsch found that he had to modify his account of intention. When a poet (Shakespeare is Hirsch's example) writes a sonnet in Elizabethan England about his lover and we read that sonnet today it has lost any meaning because the lover to whom it is addressed is irrelevant (dead) or unknown. Hirsch had to allow a work like that to retain some sort of meaning (or to modify its meaning as time elapses) so that, when we read it, it still has some sort of meaning. We might construe the words in (slightly) different ways from the way that Shakespeare intended. He comments that "when I apply Shakespeare's sonnet to my own lover rather than to his, I do not change his meaning-intention but rather instantiate and fulfil it."[102] Hirsch also admits "unconscious" intentions as part of the meaning of a work and implications of a text. There we have it; the cat is out of the bag and intentions start to rise up everywhere.

In summary, I am arguing that we read a story-text and we make a story-world as a result of our encounter with that text. How we "see" the story, will depend upon our previous experience and general understanding and the text itself. We must make a world that is generally compatible with the text (for to do otherwise would be to "read" a different story). We do not have, and do not need, access to the author's intentions to make a legitimate story-world and legitimate story-worlds

---

102 E. D. Hirsch Jr., "Meaning and Significance Reinterpreted", in *Critical Inquiry*, 11, (1984), p. 210.

are not necessarily unique. This position is well summarised by Nelson Goodman and Katherine Elgin in some of Goodman's final writing:

> That a text has a single right interpretation that is determined by the author's intentions has been, and perhaps still is, ... the most popular view. But, ... it is untenable. ... [T]he significance of a work often diverges from, and may transcend or fall short of, what the author had in mind. Where information about the author's intentions is available, it may suggest interpretations of his work. ... Understanding a work may be quite different from understanding what the author intended by it.[103]

A Question of Style

It is sometimes argued that a text or a painting exhibits "aesthetic" properties that are not supervenient upon the collection of words which is the text or the dabs of paint which are the painting, but upon extraneous (perhaps historical) facts about its creation or other matters.[104] This chapter is not arguing a case for or against that position, since we are not concerned with aesthetic properties.

This chapter does not argue a case for, or against, the position that certain "aesthetic" properties of a work arise from aspects of the text (or painting) not to

---

103 Nelson Goodman and Catherine Z. Elgin, *Reconceptions in Philosophy and Other Arts and Sciences*, London: Routledge, London, 1988, p. 55.

104 See, for example, Arthur C. Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, or Kendall L. Walton, "Categories of Art", in Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art,* 2004. Walton argues that certain aesthetic properties might well depend upon the circumstances of a work's creation. But, Walton concedes that "whether an artist intended his work to be coherent or serene has nothing essential to do with whether it is coherent or serene." (p. 154). It is simply that some intentional or historic aspects of a work or its creation might have some aesthetic affects. This study does not dispute that.

be found just in the text itself. The story-world to be made from a plagiarised text (or a forged painting) may be the same as that to be made from the "original" work, while the aesthetic status of the plagiarised or forged work may be inferior. That is not a question that has been considered here. Aspects of the story-world, of course, will depend upon how the reader makes that world. If I find a story sad, it is because of the way I make the story-world. That is all; there may well be other properties of the work: aesthetic, as well as others to do with art history, the psychology of the author and so forth, that arise from extraneous matters. This thesis is silent on this question.

What is incontrovertible is that the style in which a work is written will, in many ways, determine our reaction to it. That is to say that we will react to the story-world (or make it) in different ways depending on the style in which the story is told. The poet does, as Plato said, manipulate our feelings and he does that by the way the material is presented. Every thing must be presented from some perspective. That includes a story. There can be no bare recitation of facts or of plot. This was, partly, the complaint of Plato. The poets write their stories in a seductive manner. They do not merely tell the story. They tell it in such a way as to evoke our sympathy or support for the actions or the characters described. Plato would prefer "poets who are severe rather than amusing".[105] He would prefer a simple narrative style.[106]

But, of course, there can be no neutral telling. The author must choose to tell the story this way rather than that using these words rather than those. The author may (by choice or default) use a certain style of language — prose rather than poetry. The author may write in an easy, flowing style or may labour over the stylistic details. Such choices will, rightly, influence how we understand the work for, they are in the work as presented to us. We prefigured the need to raise this question in our early discussion of *Sohrab and Rustum.* Nevertheless, style, as a

---

105 Plato, *The Republic,* 398b.

largely aesthetic question is not a major issue in our discussion, yet it is not possible to ignore it completely. Here, I want to briefly consider this issue. Does the style of a work affect our making of the story-world? It is necessary to say something on this matter before we leave the question of interpretation.

We may detect two questions here. The first question relates to the way the author uses language. This question relates to the way the author chooses words and puts them together: Nabakov's brilliant and flamboyant style as opposed to Hemingway's sparse prose; the style of works written centuries ago as opposed to a more modern style of writing.

The second question relates to the choices the author makes in presenting the work: telling the story from this point of view, rather than that; choosing to tell the story in diary form; choosing to tell the story from the perspective of one of the characters or from the perspective of the omniscient narrator and so forth. In considering these two aspects, we are giving the term "style" a very wide meaning. On this definition, the narrative is the plot and, perhaps, the characterisation; everything else relates to the way the author tells the story and comes under the heading of "style".

We expect that some aspects of style will affect the way we make the story-world. Our aim here is to examine this question briefly.

There is no question that style is an important part of our enjoyment of reading. Style may be what attracts us to a work or it may be a factor contributing to our dislike of a work. A poorly written work may be unacceptable to some readers; other readers will not read a work written in a flamboyant style preferring a simple prose style (Hemingway over Nabakov). We read Shakespeare, partly, because of his writing style. We select a novel because we like the author (which is, at least in part, to say we like her writing style).

---

106 Ibid., 394a.

There are many books written on the question of style in literature. I do not want to conduct an extensive investigation of the matter and will base my few comments upon a work by James Phelan.[107] Phelan claims that "language is never all-important in fiction, but the degree of importance it has may vary a great deal from novel to novel, or, indeed, from one passage in a novel to another."[108] Let us consider the way the author presents the story before the question of language use. The author presents certain information. We may be given (parts of) conversations, or be told what certain characters are thinking. The author presents the story in a certain manner. We are given the story from the point of view of one (or more) character. We are given the story in a diary form.

Henry James chooses to tell *The Turn of the Screw*, as a story within a story. The outer story relates to the papers that are presented as being written by the governess. The inner (main) story is the contents of those papers. We, therefore, have the story from the point of view of the main protagonist, the governess. It is a set of papers, left by her, on her death; these tell her story. She is the main protagonist, in part at least, from James' choice in telling the story this way. But that choice leaves open the possibility of our interpreting the story in the ways we have encountered. We are able to see the governess as deranged and say that there were no ghosts. That sort of interpretation would be very difficult to sustain if the story were presented by an omniscient narrator or by Mrs. Grose (assuming she admits to seeing the ghosts in her "version" of the story). The papers come to us after the governess has died and with no independent (within the story-world) attestation as to their veracity. Thus, we are able to see them as the product of a deranged mind in Cranfield's manner, if we choose.

So, in this case, the manner of writing the story opens the work to different interpretations. Some of these would not be valid if the (same) story were told

---

107 James Phelan, *Worlds from Words: A Theory of Language in Fiction,* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1981.

108 Ibid., p. 7.

differently. But, then it would not be the same story. The text would probably not allow the making of the same (set of) story-worlds.

When we read a story we make the story-world. And we react to that world; we feel fear and sorrow. I will say much more about our reactions to stories in a later chapter. For now, we simply recognise that we do react in these ways. Now, it is clear that one of the devices the author uses to manipulate our reactions to the story-world is the way the story is presented. Tolstoy tells us a lot about Anna Karenina and what we are told evokes our sympathy; we cry for her at the end of her story. A story can be presented in many ways. We might laugh at a tragic event if the story is presented in a suitable manner. The play *Romeo and Juliet* is a tragedy; the "Pyramus and Thisbe" play within *A Midsummer Nights Dream* is a farce, yet the two stories are very similar.

It is clear that the way the story is presented contributes to how we make the story-world and, greatly, to how we react to that world. Phelan follows a methodology similar to that adopted here, discussing a selection of novels and analysing the style in which they are written. We need not pursue the question into those details; our purpose is simply to recognise the effect style has on our perception of characters and situations in a story-world. We should distinguish between the making of story-worlds and the analysis of how different readers do that. Phelan, for example, rejects deconstructive approaches. I merely note that such approaches concentrate more on the author and the writing than on the story-world. Where deconstructionists do consider the story-world, they are often more interested in what is omitted. That is fine; it is simply a different activity from the making of story-worlds and, therefore, relates to the work (that is the text) in a non-mimetic manner.

Let us now turn to the other aspect of style: the language used.

Nabakov's *Lolita* is a linguistic *tour de force* by one of literature's greatest word magicians and it is difficult to see this story succeeding with a lesser craftsman. It

is essential, if the work is to succeed, that we make Humbert Humbert's world sympathetically, yet not so sympathetically as to agree with his evaluation of nymphets. That many readers do successfully make the Lolita story-world is due to Nabakov's style. There is a clear plot in the work and the story is written in a particular style. We make the story-world the way we do as a result of the plot presented in Nabakov's style. Some works, of course, do not seem to depend upon style but succeed almost entirely on the strength of their narrative. Examples of such works are detective thrillers, murder mysteries and the like. That is not to say that such works lack style; everything must be written in some style. However, in some works style is a more significant part of the work. *Lolita* depends very much on its language. A poem such as *Sohrab and Rustum* or *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, also depend heavily on the language used and the manner of its use (they are narrative poems with a strong story line, after all).

Phelan introduces us to a novel by Gass, *Willie Masters' Lonesome Wife.*[109] Gass' novel has a weak story line. The "story" is no more than a device to hold together the work. The real purpose of the work[110] seems to be its discussion of language; much of the work is self-referential and "plays" with language. To the extent that it is doing this, it is not a story. There is a story-world; this world concerns Babs Masters, the eponymous lonesome wife, and a sexual exploit with a travelling salesman. But that theme is barely elaborated (as it might be in, say, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*). The work itself is printed so that the page layout is also a work. One of the work's pages, for example, is filled with asterisks and footnotes. The cover proclaims that the book is a "homage to the pleasures of language." The limited content is, however, a homage to the pleasures of sex and the story-world is the interpretation of the text to make the "story". The rest is attributable to style.

---

109 Gass, *Willie Masters' Lonesome Wife.*

110 That is, the author's intention.

If we consider a work like *Jabberwocky*, we find the same approach. Carroll presents a linguistic *tour de force* but that does not make an interesting story-world. However, when we read *Jabberwocky*, we try very hard to make sense of it; that is, to make its story-world and we almost succeed. Were the poem just a little more difficult to do this with, we would find it uninteresting. The interest in *Willie Masters' Lonesome Wife* is, at best, an interest in the way it plays with language and in the total layout of the printed book.

Such works are designed (I think this is the author's intention) to draw attention to themselves — that is to say to the writing and to the manner of its production. To attend to such considerations is to be distracted from the task of story-world making and to draw attention to the task of considering the printed work, in the case of the Gass, *qua* printed work. Gadamer notes that we can do much the same if we go to the opera to listen to the singer (Callas is his example) rather than to the music; we are distracted from the art work to the technical aspects — however fine — of its presentation. To do that is like going to the art gallery to admire the way the curator has presented the work. Gadamer suggests that this attitude is "incapable of mediating an experience of art in any real sense."[111] Perhaps what is happening is that, rather than concentrating on the novel as the producer of its story-world, we concentrate on its production as a work of art. For the total work to succeed, this production must succeed. The singer acts as a distraction from the work being performed. In the case of *Jabberwocky*, we notice the words and the way they are strung together (the poetry) rather than the world being made. To make the Willie Masters' Lonesome Wife story-world is difficult and the method of presenting the material (the text) that we use to do that is distracting from that task. To make the Jabberwocky story-world is close to impossible. But then, such an activity is not to treat the work as a representation at all; it is, rather, to treat it

---

111 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays* (transl. Nicholas Walker), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 52.

as a technical activity and that is a different activity from the one we are considering.

Lamarque observes that "[w]hat we discover about a fictional world derives from both what is said [the story] and ... how it is said [the style]"[112]. That is what we have found; the style of the work must contribute to the making of the story-world. In this sense, whatever its brilliance, *Willie Masters' Lonesome Wife* is not a completely successful novel, for its style (deliberately) distracts us from our world-making task. This is not to impugn the work (many good things are not novels). *Lolita*, on the other hand, is a successful novel (most critics seem to agree on that).

Phelan concludes, and this seems to follow from our own brief discussion, that style is not, usually, what contributes most to the making of a story-world (he talks about narratives), for a story-world is made up of its inhabitants and geography together with the events that unfold there. These things depend upon the plot, geography and characterisation of the work. Yet, how we make them will depend upon what we are told (or shown) of that world; this depends upon the perspective from which we see the world. But further, our reaction to the story-world (which arises, in part at least, from how we make it) depends upon the style of the work.

This is all we need to say about style here. Our purpose has been to recognise that this is a factor that is important. To digress further into this question would extend the length of this thesis unacceptably. We have considered story-worlds and their making. I now wish to turn our attention to the "real" world.

---

112 Lamarque, *Fictional Points of View*, p. 60.

CHAPTER 3

Actual Worlds

I will, in this chapter, lay out a theory of how we come to see the ("real") world the way we do. My major argument will be that we make the world in which we live (which I will call an actual world) and that we make it in potentially many different ways. The world is not a given; it is a lifelong, hard labour to make and maintain our actual world. The making of this world we do by the activity of symbolising. This implies that the making of actual worlds and the making of story-worlds are very similar activities. I will take up that issue in the next chapter.

I want to base the discussion in this chapter around a critical (but generally favourable) consideration of Nelson Goodman's philosophy of worldmaking. I will then propose some modifications to that philosophy. This will lead to a revised approach to (as I will call it) Goodmanian worldmaking. Finally, I will distinguish my approach to worldmaking from some other approaches in order both to illustrate and illuminate what I am proposing and what I am not proposing, and also to fend off criticism of the thesis I am arguing. I will also need to consider briefly, before I conclude the chapter, the question of relativism and absolutism.

Goodman readily acknowledged a significant debt to both C. I. Lewis and Ernst Cassirer. It is not, however, my purpose here to trace the genesis of Goodman's

ideas in these, or other, philosophers. I will quote from these writers on occasion to illustrate what Goodman is saying. Neither is it my purpose to trace the development of Goodman's ideas in his own work. Suffice it to say that, even in his earliest published book, *The Structure of Appearance*,[113] we may see the germ of his finished philosophy. The aspects of his philosophy, however, that will concern us most are spelled out very clearly in *Ways of Worldmaking*.[114]

Goodmanian Worldmaking

It is hardly controversial to suggest that there is no particular way that we must see the world (this world in which we live). That is not to say, simply, that the world could have been otherwise (obviously it could have been) but to note that we could see the world, as it is, in, potentially, many different ways. This is simply evidenced by the recognition that not all societies have had a worldview that is like our own. Before Copernicus, it was unthinkable that the earth was anything but at the centre of the universe; most of us no longer think that way.

We come to see the world the way we do from our experience (where the term "experience" should be taken to have the widest meaning). I will talk of coming to see the world in a particular fashion as "making" a world, and the world so made I will call an "actual world". This is Goodman's usage; the terms "reality" and "real world" I prefer to avoid. Sometimes it is not possible to do that without resorting to convoluted verbal excesses; where these, and similar, terms are used, they are intended to mean simply the totality of what there is (but without

---

113 Nelson Goodman, *The Structure of Appearance* 3rd ed., Dordrecht: D Reidel, 1977.

implying any recognised form to that totality). Often I will simply refer to the "world" to mean that totality.

I see and experience the world. Perhaps I receive instruction from my elders. I come to see the world a particular way. I learn to see things and categorise them as birds and animals and mammals and so forth. Depending on how I am taught and what my social group takes as fact, I will learn to see the world in some way. We know that different societies classify things differently.

I am claiming that there are no pre-ordained categories and there is no Platonic heaven. There are no facts (until we make the world a particular way); it is we who make the facts (but, of course, we do not form the world in the way it is). But the way we make the facts determines the way the world is (for us). C. I. Lewis put it this way: "[t]he world of experience is not given in experience: it is constructed by thought from the data of sense."[115] It is mental activity that makes an actual world, a world of objects and things; so "[f]or the merely receptive and passive mind, there could be no objects and no world."[116] The making of an (actual) world is a strenuous mental task. Since "facts" depend upon a way of seeing things and a way of saying things, facts are made, not found.

Further, it is possible to use the "raw" data of experience to make actual worlds in different, and even incompatible, ways. Thus, Goodman says, there are many worlds. He means many ways of making actual worlds from the same experiences

---

114 Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*, Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1978.

115 Clarence Irving Lewis, *Mind and the World-Order: Outline of a Theory of Knowledge,* New York: Dover, 1929, p. 29.

116 Ibid., p. 137.

and these different actual worlds may not be compatible. Goodman's (almost hackneyed) example is this.[117] There is an actual world in which

(1) The world (he means the Earth) moves; and an actual world in which

(2) The world does not move.

Thus, we have (at least two) incompatible ways of making an actual world and, for Goodman, the two actual worlds described by these statements are different worlds. This, we will see, creates a problem to which we will return.

The particulars that populate an actual world are what they are because we invest them with their (separate) existences. It is we who pick out of the night sky certain (bright) areas and call them stars. But, Goodman says, it is not just that we give them a name; it is the process of selecting them out for special consideration that makes them what they are. We then select certain conglomerates of these stars and call them constellations, such as the Big Dipper (or Orion). Goodman is prepared to say that we make the stars.[118]

The making of actual worlds occurs in a dialectic (not a word that Goodman uses) between how we experience the world and how we make those actual worlds. We cannot decree, however, that things will be any way we wish. We can decree them to be a certain way, but the way we decree them to be must be consistent with how we experience things (or, if you prefer, how things are). Goodman, therefore, prefers a concept of rightness to one of truth and a concept of understanding to one of knowledge.[119] Rightness applies to a system. A detail is right within a system but not necessarily across systems; rightness has a limited life. Something

---

117 Nelson Goodman, *Of Mind and Other Matters*, Cambridge, MA: Harvester University Press, 1984, pp. 30-31. See also *Ways of Worldmaking*, pp. 111-115.

118 Nelson Goodman, "On Starmaking", in Peter J. McCormick, *Starmaking*, 1996, p. 144.

119 Goodman and Elgin, *Reconceptions in Philosophy*, pp. 153-166.

can be right without being true; we can sacrifice (what we take to be) truth for a good, convenient and easy approximation both in the world of science and in everyday life (and it is right to do so). For many commentators, something is true or false and, once true, must, if suitably qualified, always be true. Rightness does not have that quality.

If the world we make (our actual world) does not fit the world (the way things are), it is not a right actual world (that is a right way of seeing things or a right way of making that actual world). Rightness is, therefore, not simply a measure of how well things describe a pre-made world but, rather, a matter of the fit between how things are and how we make them to be.[120] Rightness is a demanding requirement for an actual world, more demanding than, say, coherence or even consistency alone; a right world is not just any old salad tossed together, for "a false or otherwise wrong version can hold together as well as a right one."[121] If our description does not fit the world, we must modify that description (or worse) to achieve a fit. Goodman suggests that standards of right and wrong, become more, not less, important[122] in determining what worlds fit.

The manner in which scientific theory is developed illustrates the general way we make worlds. A theory must fit (what scientists call) the facts. But, as has often been observed,[123] what are considered to be the facts develop with the theory. This is not to say that the theory and the facts will always fit, for obviously there come times when the theory must be modified, perhaps radically. Making a world is a matter of making facts and fitting them together to make a comprehensive and complex pattern which is an actual world. This is a process of trial and error.

---

120 Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*, p. 132.

121 Goodman, *Of Mind and Other Matters*, p. 37.

122 Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking,* p. 107.

123 By, for example, Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* 2nd ed., Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1970. Or by Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method* rev. edn., London: Verso, 1988.

As I have said, there are many possible ways that things could be that would be consistent with our experience. Further, there cannot be one correct version (a sort of super version) of which all the others are approximations, for there can be no unconceptualised reality against which any given conceptualisation can be measured. There can be many different, right worlds. A right world for mediaeval Europe and a right world for Australia today are different. Failure to make a right actual world could have disastrous (even fatal) consequences.

Further, it could be argued that any given actual world is unique to an individual. It is, roughly, the sum of what that individual believes about the world (although beliefs are not quite the same as facts about the actual world). Since my experience differs from yours, what I know will differ from what you know in matters of detail and, possibly, even in the way we see broader questions. Our actual worlds will be, as a consequence of this, different. However, my actual world, while differing in detail from yours, is broadly similar to yours. If it were not, it would be impossible for us to have a meaningful conversation. The members of any particular social group have, therefore, sufficiently similar actual worlds. Of course, such worlds will differ (perhaps significantly) in some respects. That may be where communication will break down. One person may construct an actual world containing a deity while another may omit such a construct.

Symbolising Worlds

Actual worlds are made by the act of symbolising them. Worlds are made, Goodman says, with "words, numerals, pictures, sounds, or other symbols of any

kind in any medium."[124] Symbols allow us to, *inter alia*, represent things. In saying "represent", I mean represent in the widest sense of the term. Worlds can be made with any symbols (pictures, words, plans and so forth) but we will concentrate our attention on symbolisation using words. We can, Goodman says, "have words without a world but no world without words or other symbols."[125] Until we have symbolised the world we make we do not have a world at all, for the very act of making requires that we symbolise what we have made. The making is the symbolising and the symbolising is the making.

Cassirer observed that:

> Before the intellectual work of conceiving and understanding of phenomena can set in, the work of naming must have preceded it, and have reached a certain point of elaboration. For it is this process which transforms the world of sense impression ... into a mental world, a world of ideas and meanings.[126]

We are, of course, constantly receiving sense impressions of one kind or another. Many (probably most) of these we ignore. Psychologists and physiologists tell us that much of our "sensual experience" is "manufactured". Nelson Goodman refers to examples of this activity in *Ways of Worldmaking*.[127] When we teach children to speak (and, therefore, to think), we draw their attention to (what we call) things (objects such as a block) and to (what we call) the properties of those objects (colours such as red) and we say the relevant words to them. We get children to notice in certain ways and we seem to succeed with enough repetition. What is noticed is given a "special linguistic accent, a name."[128] Further, what we get

---

124 Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*, p. 94.

125 Ibid., p. 6.

126 Ernst Cassirer, *Language and Myth* (transl. Susanne K. Langer), Dover, 1946, p. 28.

127 Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking,* pp. 72-78, where he discusses the way the mind manufactures apparent motion when spots and shapes of different colours and sizes are flashed in different locations onto a screen.

128 Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, p. 38.

them to notice is what we already think it is relevant or important for them to notice. That, of course, is part of our social conditioning and that, in turn, reflects the community in which we live. It is the use of symbols that makes community possible.[129] It is important to us to teach our children to see the world in ways that make sense to us. This provides a human continuity of interpreted experience and, thus, actual worlds, from one generation to the next.

As we develop and grow, so does our experience and that experience becomes more sophisticated. It is seen through the lens of our existing symbolisations. We extend the range, depth and detail of those symbolisations. We give more things names and the names divide the world more finely; we create abstractions. We use the symbols we already command to generate new symbols. These symbols may be abstract, encompassing systems of religion, mathematics and science. We may also use the symbols we already command to make new objects, such as unicorns. These objects may, or may not, exist in our actual world (and, even if they do not exist in my actual world, they may in someone else's). These objects may be objects we have not seen or experienced directly. Our experience encompasses what we are told (for the being told is, itself, an experience); we are told about things such as unicorns, skunks and Bourke. In this way, we also use the symbols we already command to extend our description of our actual world and populate it with places (such as Bourke) to which we have never been and people (such as the queen) whom we have never met. Even if the world does not contain unicorns (and I am neither saying that it does or that it does not) we take it that there are sorts of things like skunks, of which we may have no more than hearsay experience. We take it that these things exist and we may include them in our symbolisation of the world. We may, on further experience, modify our actual world by deleting, or adding, such objects to it. We may meet the queen or see a skunk or go to Bourke. We may change our actual world as a result (or we may not).

---

129 Ibid., p. 61.

As our experience grows, so does the way we understand and use our symbols; the dialectic operates between that symbolising activity and the world being symbolised to strengthen, deepen and extend our symbolisation. It is our symbols that we use to make the world. We should not, therefore, be surprised to recognise the power that the ancients attributed to words, magic formulae or the words of the deity. Christianity recognised in the Christ an incarnation of the divine logos. God speaks and worlds come into being. Adam names the animals. Names harbour a (possibly malicious) magic; incantations and curses are irresistible in their power. The creative power of words is such that Goodman is prepared to go so far as to say that in symbolising them, we make the stars.

Israel Scheffler is a sympathetic commentator on Goodman and his work. Yet Scheffler takes exception to the claim that we make the stars.[130] Scheffler points out that the stars were there before we even existed. He says that "the claim that we made the stars by making the word 'star' ... [is] absurd."[131] Of course, Scheffler recognises that we made the word "star" and that they were not called "stars" before that; Goodman acknowledges that much. But this is a very different claim from Goodman's claim that we make the stars.[132]

Goodman replies by saying that we make the stars "by making a space and time that contains those stars."[133] "We make a star as we make a constellation, by putting its parts together and marking off its boundaries."[134] Seeing the stars as stars and seeing them as holes in the bowl of night through which the light comes is to see different worlds. Yet, clearly, Scheffler is right; we didn't put the stars in the sky. Paul Feyerabend draws our attention to the question of defining stars

---

130 Israel Scheffler, "The Wonderful Worlds of Goodman", in Peter J. McCormick, *Starmaking*, 1996, pp. 133-141.

131 Ibid., p. 138.

132 Ibid.

133 Goodman, *Of Mind and Other Matters*, p. 42.

134 Ibid.

also. He comments that the number of stars in our galaxy "depends upon the spectral range in which you examine the matter: what looks like two stars in one range turn into a single blob in another."[135] He goes on to say that there is no definite number of stars for that would depend upon how we define things, theoretical assumptions and so forth.

Scheffler's debate with Goodman boils down, I think, to a debate about Goodman's term "make". Goodman says that there are many ways of making things; we make worlds "not with hands but with minds, or rather with languages or other symbol systems."[136] We do not make the stars, he says, as we make bricks from mud, but by our decision to pick them out and symbolise them.[137] Scheffler says that he does not like the term "make" or the term "world". He prefers to talk of "versions" of the world, but provides no alternative to Goodman's "make".

I will follow Goodman's usage, but it is important to clearly understand what the term "make" implies. Scheffler's preference (for calling worlds "versions") is too weak for Goodman's intention. Goodman talks of the symbolising as the making of worlds. We might distinguish between the activity of making in the sense of forming, or creating, and making in the sense of defining. We did not form the stars, but it is we who define them as stars. This is what Goodman means by making. He is not saying that the symbolising forms, or creates, what it names; of course it doesn't (usually) do that. He is saying that the symbolising transforms experience into (actual) worlds. Goodman seems to talk more of worlds than of actual worlds but the term actual world implies that the work of sorting experience into some form has taken place and is the term that I will use.

---

135 Paul Feyerabend, *Farewell to Reason,* London: Verso, 1987, p. 147.

136 Goodman, *Of Mind and Other Matters*, p. 42.

137 Ibid.

It might be fair to draw an analogy between this kind of making and the kind of making that occurs when an artist transforms an *objet trouvé* into a work of art. The object is the same, but it is also transformed. It is still, say, a stone but it is now also a work of art, or, to choose a well known and notorious example, Duchamp's *Fountain* is still a urinal but it is now a work of art. There is a radical difference between a urinal and a work of art, just as there is a radical difference between reality, as the basic state-of-affairs of the universe and an actual world. The state-of-affairs that we call a "star" existed (in general terms) before we existed and would exist unchanged even if we did not exist. That much is clear. Yet those stars would remain simply states of the universe. It is (in human terms) by noting them and giving them a name that we classify them and make them into particular objects. I think Goodman would agree with the claim that the state of affairs that we describe as stars would be the same whatever we did about it (or if we did not exist), but he goes on to say that, in describing and clarifying that state of affairs, we make the stars. He claims no more for our feeble powers than that.

We identify certain animals as "birds". Further, we identify certain birds within the aforementioned group as "Kookaburras". It is not that we created Kookaburras or birds but that we, in classifying them that way, put them into those groupings. We could have classified these animals differently. This is what it means to make an actual world. It is to carve up the "raw" material into humanly understandable pieces and to sort reality and, therefore, experience.

Worldmaking is a hard and difficult business. It is a matter that occupies our entire lives from the time we are born. We are always refining our understanding of the world. We add to our actual world as we learn new things. We delete things and modify things. We also continually modify our understanding of how things are. When we, sadly, learn that there is no Santa Claus, not only do we delete him from the denizens of the world but we are forced to make other rearrangements of our actual world to account for the phenomena (the appearance of gifts, fat men in red suits on street corners and so forth) that were previously

accounted for by the idea of Santa Claus. We add objects to our actual world; we delete objects from it; we connect objects in new ways and we make new classifications. This process continues all our lives as we make and remake our world. Usually that process is gradual. We could define each small change as a new actual world. It is probably better to recognise that possibility, but also to recognise that to do so would, generally speaking, be unhelpful. We will talk of actual worlds as if they were static.

Many Actual Worlds

Goodman tells us that we make not just one, but many, actual worlds.[138] His claim goes further than the claim that we all make (slightly) different actual worlds, or the claim that different societies make worlds quite different from each other or even the claim that we change our minds about things and so remake our world to cater for new experiences and new decisions. These claims are, I think, relatively uncontroversial and Goodman would certainly recognise them. Goodman is claiming more than this.

We operate within our actual world. We believe that the world is constituted in a certain manner, so we operate according to that belief. We must do this (even if we behave prudently in the face of doubt or the possibility of horrific consequences). We believe that, if we step out a window, we will fall. So we don't do it. Goodman, however, wants to go much further than just acknowledging that our actual world evolves and changes over time. He argues that each individual operates in many different actual worlds at any given time.

---

138 Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*, p. 93.

The individual invokes a suitable world for any particular situation. His argument runs thus.

We believe many things. Suppose a person uses statements (1) and (2), on different occasions:

(1) The world moves; and

(2) The world does not move.

Goodman says that each of these is right in some situations[139] and that we operate using (1) sometimes (for example when we are thinking astronomically) and (2) sometimes (for example when we see the sunrise, or, his example, drive along the highway). Each statement reflects some truth about the world and is a right symbolisation in some situations (but not in others). This should not surprise us, for, almost certainly, there is no single all encompassing and absolutely right symbolisation.

Yet, Goodman says, these two statements cannot be true together (that is, in the same world), for they are contradictory and a contradiction of this type implies, in the classical logic to which Goodman subscribes, (logically) any statement whatsoever.[140] Therefore, Goodman says, we cannot allow these statements to coexist in a single world. Since an actual world is made by symbolisation, Goodman argues that that symbolisation must be without internal contradictions. What we must have, therefore, is two different actual worlds where each world is described by one, and only one, of these statements.

We must, Goodman tells us, operate within one world or the other. In one world, the earth does not move. When the policeman books us for speeding because we are travelling at more than 80kph (because of the rotational velocity of the earth),

---

139 Ibid.

140 Ibid., p. 110.

the policeman has made an error and is operating in the wrong world. When the guard was told to shoot the prisoners if they moved, and promptly shot them for the same reason, he made a similar error. These are Goodman's examples. The policeman and the guard should have been operating in the world (2) but were, to the loss of the driver and the prisoners, operating in world (1).[141]

So, how do we make the two different actual worlds? Goodman is unclear on this, or, if he knows, he does not tell us how. Presumably each world is described by selecting one of these two statements and other statements such that none of the statements selected for inclusion in the description of an actual world contradicts any of the others used to make that actual world. But which statements are we to select for which description? Goodman never tells us how to do that. Do we have to include the negations of all the statements we would affirm and put them into a world where their affirmation would make a contradiction? All we know is that we may not select statements that would create a contradiction of the type we are trying to eliminate. Are we free to reuse statements (other than (1) and (2))? Must we use each other statement only once and on what basis do we use them? After all, we could, I take it, combine the statements which we say are right in very many different combinations. That would allow us to make very many different actual worlds to avoid just one contradiction.

Suppose that we do the following. Make a complete list of all the statements that we would include in our belief system (this may take some time). Take statement (1) and add to it, from the list, statements so that we create a maximal non-contradictory set. Do the same with statement (2). This process will work if statements (1) and (2) are the only contradictions in our complete symbolisation. But suppose, as is almost certain, that there is more than one such pair of contradictions. In that case, there would be statements left over that could not be included in either set without making a new contradiction. We would need to introduce a new world (set of non-contradictory statements) to resolve this

---

141 Ibid., p. 121.

problem. And so forth. It is quite certain that the total belief system of any given person contains a great many contradictions (for human beings are very contrary animals).

Now, it becomes almost impossible to carve up (what we thought was) a single actual world into many separate actual worlds, for the order in which we select statements for inclusion in any given actual world would limit which statements are included in any given actual world.

Further, we would find, on Goodman's analysis, that we have carved up what most of us consider to be a single actual world into many very separate actual worlds without knowing that we have done so! Our problem compounds out of control. I will propose a solution to this problem shortly. Before I do, I want to say a little more about the problem.

One common answer to Goodman's problem is to claim that we do not accept either statement (1) or statement (2) "raw" but that they are always taken in a frame in which a third statement

(3) The earth and the sun are in relative motion

is accepted. Statements (1) and (2), it is claimed, then occur within a single world but glossed against statement (3). We say that the truth of statements (1) and (2) depends upon the frame of reference against which the statements are measured. If we take the sun to be stationary, then the earth moves. If we take the earth to be stationary then the sun moves; we see it rise in the morning, cross the sky and set in the west. And we speak about the daily events of life in just those terms.

But, for Goodman, this is no reconciliation.[142] Moves relative to what? There is no fixed point. The sun, itself, can be considered to be stationary or to move for different purposes. Goodman says that statement (3) is not a reconciliation of

---

142 Ibid., p. 116.

statements (1) and (2) but a different world from that represented by either of those earlier statements. This "solution" does not solve the difficulty but, rather, for Goodman, compounds it by introducing a third actual world. But this need not be so. We may, surely, have statements (1), (2) and (3) all as part of our actual world. But we always operate with a subset of our actual world at any given time. I look at the sunset and I do not worry about relative motion. But statement (3) is available to back up our total set of beliefs, if required. And I think we use it that way.

It is certainly true that statement (3) produces a different world from statements (1) or (2) *solus*. Ptolemy (it seems) included statement (1) in his actual world (but not statements (2) or (3)); Copernicus included (2) (but not (1) or (3)) and Einstein included (3) (possibly, with statements (1) and (2) glossed against it). And so do most educated Australians today. That is all.

We use, Goodman says, the different worlds for different purposes and the world we use must fit the particular purpose we have. If we always think of movement relative to the sun, our lives would become very complicated; most ordinary movement is based on the assumption that the world doesn't move. So we travel at a certain speed along the highway.[143] As we have noted, error arises, Goodman says, when we use the wrong world for our purposes. The guard who was told to shoot all the prisoners if they moved and promptly did so, made such an error.[144] The policeman who charged citizens with speeding along the highway because of the rotational velocity of the earth made a similar error. Any sentence needs to be interpreted. We usually do this without carefully paying attention to the words uttered. We know that the instructing officer means his subordinate to shoot the prisoners if they move (significantly — we take it he is excluding those natural movements associated with breathing and so forth) from the place on the Earth

---

143 Goodman in Goodman and Elgin, *Reconceptions in Philosophy and Other Arts and Sciences*, p. 98.

144 Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*, p. 121.

where they are, at the time of his issuing the instruction, unless subsequently instructed otherwise. Many of the things we say, if carefully and strictly analysed against the rules (are there such things?) of grammar, do not stand up.

Or, Perhaps, Just One Actual World?

However we understand the term "world" or "actual world," Goodman's claim that we make multiple such worlds at any given time, defies commonsense. If we do that, we do not know that we are doing it! I wish to argue that we do not have to see the world as a series of separate (different) actual worlds. We think of our actual world as one thing and we symbolise it as one thing. Most of us would be prepared to affirm a fourth statement:

(4) There is only one (actual) world.

We do not carve our world up into (self-consistent) pieces.

Sometimes we do make different worlds and we, knowingly, use them for different purposes. The physicist who treats light in different ways at different times for different purposes does this knowingly (and accepts the apparent contradiction in doing so). But, this is a very special sort of activity and the physicist does not, as a consequence of her using different worlds thus, affirm any proposition whatsoever, as Goodman suggests she must. The physicist is careful only to apply the physical theory to those cases where she believes it is appropriate. The person who knowingly lives two different lives or switches from rôle to rôle may do this too (although such people are probably able to offer a rationalisation of their behaviour). Perhaps actors or children at play, who get "lost" in their acting or playing, do this. My argument is with Goodman's claim

that we must make many different worlds at the one time (even though we think we make only one). Remember that Goodman says this because, and only because, of his problem with logic.

Let us, then, finish briefly with Goodman's own example, which I will start by confessing that I do not find compelling. Goodman merely dismisses the power of statement (3) by saying that it makes a new world, separate and different from that made by (1) or (2). I do not see why statement (3) cannot be used as a way of resolving the dilemma produced by statements (1) and (2). Certainly, (3) makes a different world from (1) and/or (2) as we have already observed. Seeing motion as relative is different from seeing it in terms of a fixed point (whatever that fixed point). If we accept statement (3), however, we do not solve the guard's problem. The requirement (that the prisoners be shot if they move) still must be interpreted. The guard has simply misunderstood the command of his superior. He need not live in a different world to do that.

We use (1) when we drive along the road and calculate how long it will take to arrive at our destination. We treat the earth as stationary and the road as stationary. The car moves. That is, merely, a convenient simplification. We teach a version of astronomy at school which is based on (2). If we wish to send a rocket to the moon or to Mars, we will base our work on (2) but if we wish to go to a further galaxy, we will use (3). Most of us cannot do the necessary calculations based on (3), or even (2). We know all this. But most of us do not need to do those calculations; we are rarely involved in rocket launches. We can live our lives without worrying too much about the mathematics of anything except a trip by road from Sydney to Melbourne.

However, I do not wish to press this particular example because I am convinced that, even if we resolve our difficulty with statements (1) and (2) by use of statement (3), there will be other examples of inconsistency in our actual world

that we have not dealt with so easily. It is almost certain, as I have already claimed, that our beliefs are inconsistent (and, I suspect, in many ways).

It is right to say that the world moves; it is also right to say that the world does not move. Goodman's argument is, let me repeat, that inconsistent propositions imply the truth of any proposition whatsoever. We might note that Goodman has moved from a concept of rightness to one of truth and he frames the whole discussion about consistency in terms of truth, rather than terms of rightness. Goodman makes it clear, elsewhere, that rightness does not imply truth. We have already observed that, where truth claims an eternal aspect, rightness need make no such claim. Truth is absolute, but rightness already has a relativistic character. In his later writings, Goodman seems to be moving towards a recognition of this when he says that "[d]efeat and confusion are built into the notions of truth and certainty and knowledge."[145] Does the rightness of incompatible beliefs imply the rightness of any belief whatsoever? There seems to be no obvious reason to suppose so. In fact, symbolisations of an actual world stand or fall (often) as a whole. If we make deductions from right statements, I do not see why the deduction itself must be right; conclusions of that sort are still required to fit the world. This is my first argument against Goodman's problem.

The problem arises, as I have said, from Goodman's commitment to classical logical models, which include the laws of the excluded middle and of non-contradiction. Joseph Margolis talks about the "extraordinary lengths to which theorists will go — witness Goodman and Quine — to avoid giving up excluded middle."[146] He says that Goodman and Quine "do not wish to have any truck with weakening our adherence to a bipolar logic."[147] Graham Priest describes

---

145 Goodman and Elgin, *Reconceptions in Philosophy*, p. 153.

146 Joseph Margolis, *The Truth About Relativism*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991, p. 117.

147 Ibid., p. 156.

arguments such as Goodman's as "superficial".[148] This is my second argument against Goodman's problem.

It just might be better to give up some of our classical logical convictions, rather than to live in a schizoid world. This will be my second line of attack on this part of Goodman's theory. If we weaken the classical laws of logic, the difficulty goes away. To desert these logical requirements is not, however, to throw everything away as Goodman seemed to think. The demand that a world be right, that it fit our lives and circumstances, is a powerful demand, which rules out the "anything goes" criticism so often levelled at Goodman and people who argue positions such as that being put here. Neither do we just accept a mish-mash of inconsistent beliefs and claim to have a world. The requirement of rightness demands more respect than that. Logic and rationality cannot be simply and ruthlessly jettisoned. These are valuable qualities worth striving for.

Consistency is one of the criteria we use to judge our beliefs and some of us spend a considerable part of our lives attempting to attain consistency of belief. We do judge actual worlds on their consistency; and it is right to do so. In general terms, we do not expect the world to be inconsistent and, therefore, we do not expect our beliefs about the world to be inconsistent and, therefore, we do not deliberately make inconsistent actual worlds. It is accepted by all (so-called rational) people that statements should not contradict and, ordinarily, they do not. This is why we resolve our dilemma with statements (1) and (2) by the use of (3) and why we select which paradigm to use in a particular situation.

The physicist who uses different models for different types of (optical) problems may exemplify that. She knows that certain sorts of problem are more likely to yield to one form of treatment than the other. Most physicists would like to resolve their difficulties by creating a single theory to cover both situations. Until

---

148 Graham Priest, *In Contradiction: A Study in the Transconsistent*, Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987, p. 6.

that can be done, they live with the inconsistency; the only alternative is to have no theory and no solution to their problems at all.

However, some logicians now think that consistency has been overrated. Graham Priest seems to think so. [149] It is possible to provide non-classical systems of logic. For example, we can create systems where (P.~P) can be so; systems where propositions can have multiple truth-values and so forth. It is not my purpose to discuss such logics in any detail here, or even to argue in their support. I merely observe that the possibility removes Goodman's worry from classical logic. Dialetheism is the philosophy which holds that logic does fail (at least, at the limits of thought). We know that it is possible to formulate sentences that have inherent paradoxicality. The following:

(5) This sentence is false.

is an example.

We can allow the sentence to be both true and false, or neither true nor false as one way of resolving the apparent paradox. We may note that many an Escher print exhibits the same kinds of paradoxicality. Such paraconsistent logics were not available to Nelson Goodman.

We have already noted that the discussion of logics is conducted using the terms "true" and "false" and "proposition". But, as we have observed, our world making is carried out using concepts of rightness and we make worlds with sentences, rather than propositions. Before leaving this very brief survey it is appropriate to note that propositions are always expressed by language and, in a working situation (stripped of theory) we must live within that limitation. It may be that the world is not able to be consistently symbolised. That may be because the

---

149 See Graham Priest, *An Introduction to Non-Classical Logic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, for a good overview of some alternatives to classical models of logic.

world is, in some way, inconsistent. It may just be a limitation of our language systems. It would, surely, be a requirement of a consistent propositional language that it could not be used to express sentences such as (5) above.

I am not saying that we can (as a matter of course) blithely assert (P.~P); to do that would be to bring the contradictions into stark relief. We prefer to avoid the difficulties inherent in seeing our actual world as contradictory. We attempt to resolve such contradictions, often using subtle and sophistical arguments. There are some situations where we do accept contradictions. Such situations are often at the limits of thought. For example, theologians accept (apparently) contradictory claims about God and the nature of Christ. Infinite numbers seem to present contradictions and, at the level of quanta, we encounter physicists who also live with contradictions. Graham Priest discusses a number of such situations. His examples are things such as infinity and death. These situations represent cusps in our experience.[150] Language, that is to say, our symbolisations, fail at such places. It has been suggested, by Armour-Garb and Beal, that it is not possible to restrict language so as to render truth non-paradoxical. If they are right, we must always live with dialetheism.[151] My second argument, thus, points to limitations in our logical systems.

My third argument goes to human psychology. Problems such as those suggested above are, as I have just said, extremes. Most of the contradictions that we live with are simpler than that. We all have one set of (universal) rules, some of which do not apply to ourselves. We can spend a lot of care keeping such contradictions apart, especially when the separated matters are dear to us. We try to avoid allowing contradictory views of the world to come together so that we can remain unaware of the contradiction. This could be, almost certainly is, a defensive

---

150 Graham Priest has discussed these and other examples in *Beyond the Limits of Thought,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995.

function of our subconscious. It has often been observed (for example, by Nietzsche)[152] how amenable we are to believing what we wish. If the inconsistency is forced upon our view, then we usually feel forced to modify our actual world or, somehow, rationalise our beliefs so that the contradiction disappears (or seems to disappear). When we say (3) we are doing just that (but in a more rational manner than may always be the case). We can change our understanding of the world (that is, we can change the way we symbolise the world). Often, this means that we subtly change the manner in which we understand the symbolisation or we produce a rationalisation (for example, we define movement as relative, and accept both that the world moves and that it does not move). This is, of course, to make a new world to replace the former one. Occasionally, we radically change our world (for example, in a religious conversion — or unconversion). This may be a painful and difficult thing to do, and the process of remaking may extend over a lengthy period of time. Goodman says that a world is slowly and painfully made, over a lifetime; he tells us that it is hard intellectual work.[153] It is usually with great reluctance that we discard a world and start remaking. We can never, of course, completely cast off a world and recommence making from nothing. That would be to become a baby again.

The claim I am making is just that we keep contradictory beliefs (which is to say, sentential symbolisations) apart or separated (in our minds).[154]

---

151 Bradley Armour-Garb and J. C. Beal, "Minimalism and the Dialethic Challenge", *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 81, (2003), pp. 383-401.

152 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* (transl. R. J. Hollingdale), Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973, No. 68, p. 72, for example.

153 Goodman, *Of Mind and Other Matters*, p. 35.

154 It is interesting, in this context, to note that Freud argued that the unconscious does not feel bound by the law of non-contradiction. He claimed that "the nucleus of the Ucs. [that is the unconscious] consists of instinctual representatives ... that is to say, instinctual impulses ... [which] are exempt from mutual contradiction." Sigmund Freud, "The Unconscious", in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological*

To conclude this brief discussion, I would like to suggest that it may not be possible, using human language, to make a world which is both rich enough for us to express ourselves and also fully consistent. The theological and physical problems alluded to above, stretch our thinking beyond the limits of our ability to symbolise and paradox arises. Priest and Routley suggest that it may not be possible to develop a fully consistent philosophy.[155]

If this is so, it will never be possible to develop a complete and complex symbolisation of the world, which is both rich and completely consistent. These sorts of philosophical difficulties will always occur in our worldmaking enterprise. We know, thanks to Gödel, that it is not possible to create a complete arithmetic. That is no reason to give up the endeavour (indeed we have no choice but to pursue it). Neither is it a reason to give up the search for consistency, but it may be a reason to suspect that the effort will exhaust us before it exhausts the possibilities. It may be, however, that the price we would have to pay for consistency would be unacceptable as it may well lead to a grotesque simplification of how things are. A rich conception may just be better, which is to say, more fruitful for human beings. The physicist would have a poorer theoretical world if she were to reject both the wave and the particulate theory of light because of inconsistency. Physicists agree that it is better to have the (inconsistent) rich theory than a more limited, but consistent, one. If our languages and descriptions of the world are not, or cannot be made to be, consistent, that does not necessarily imply that the world itself is not consistent. Perhaps it is; perhaps it is not.

I have put three arguments as to why we need not carve up our actual world into pieces the way Goodman did. We can live within one actual world and that is a

---

Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol XIV (ed. James Strachey), London: The Hogarth Press, 1957, p. 186.

155 G. Priest and R. Routley, "The Philosophical Significance and Inevitability of Paraconsistency", in Graham Priest, Richard Routley and Jean Norman eds) *Paraconsistent Logic: Essays on the Inconsistent*, 1989, p. 486.

mental or psychological thing. In order to thrive human being need a rich actual world and not a pared down one, even if there is a cost in achieving this. The making of actual worlds is an important human activity and one which opens up the beauty and wonder of nature and art. Consistency and rationality are important values; we cannot live in a deeply divided and radically inconsistent world. We need not do so.

I have argued neither for nor against dialetheism. It remains on the table as one solution to Goodman's problem, but it is not the only solution. I have also argued, that there is no one way in which we must see the world; we can see it in many different ways. We make actual worlds (in which we must live) by symbolising those worlds from our experience. Without the ability to symbolise, we would be passive recipients of stimuli and could not make sense of what is coming in, where worldmaking is active; we interact and engage with our world in order to make it. Our world making symbolisations cannot be just any way; they must be right, that is to say, compatible with how things are. It is possible (indeed probable) that many different (and incompatible) symbolisations are right (that is to say, compatible with how things are), even if they are not compatible with each other. Further, our symbolisations are almost certainly inconsistent in some ways. Within limits this need not be fatal.

Before concluding this discussion, I wish to consider the question of relativism in general. Just how relativist is this thesis? and how relativist must it be? I will also discuss the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. My purpose in doing so is to refine and to carefully and clearly delineate the boundaries of what is being argued here. In the next chapter I wish to consider the question of actual worlds and story worlds. I will, there, also discuss the questions of modal realism and of counterfactuals. That will further clarify what is being argued here.

Varieties of Relativism

Is relativism a legitimate philosophy? In particular, is the kind of relativism espoused in the foregoing a legitimate philosophy? It is often claimed that relativism is discredited and has been from the time of Plato and Aristotle. If relativism, in some form, is not a viable philosophy, then absolutism, in some form, remains the only possibility. If so, this thesis is untenable and fails. But, I do not think that the arguments put by Plato and Aristotle disprove just any relativist thesis, and, in particular, they do not disprove the form of relativism proposed in this thesis. Secondly, it would be helpful to understand just how relativist our thesis is. Certainly this thesis is a form of relativism and is incompatible with absolutism. However, our thesis imposes strict limits on our worldmaking and the rightness of claims about the world and, so, it is not compatible with extreme forms of relativism either. Neither does it go so far as to refute itself.

Let us, firstly, consider Aristotle's case against relativism. His supposed refutation of relativism goes back to his quarrel with Protagoras. Plato and Aristotle put arguments that, they said, disproved Protagoras' theory. One of the difficulties is that we know little of the detail of Protagoras' thesis, and that little is gleaned from the arguments put by Aristotle and Plato — hardly a sympathetic source. Protagoras claim is usually be summed up by the motto "man is the measure".[156] Our purpose here is not so much to vindicate Protagoras or to attempt to reconstruct his beliefs, as it is to examine the arguments put by Plato and Aristotle to see if they refute the claims made in this thesis. We will find that they do not.

---

156 Plato, *Theaetetus* (transl. Robin A. H. Waterfield), London: Penguin Books, 1987, 170a.

Aristotle, in the *Metaphysics*, argued that a proposition (sentence) cannot be both true and false at the one time.[157] Further, he argued that a proposition must be either true or false. That is the principle of the excluded middle — namely, that there is no third value (such as indeterminate or it depends). From this principle, Aristotle argued that relativism is a self-refuting philosophy. Aristotle and Plato put similar arguments. The argument that they put is, essentially, as follows.[158]

Everything is either true or false and nothing is both true and false. We have already discussed this claim. It is the claim that caused Goodman's problems. We will, for our refutation of Aristotle's argument, accept his claim on the matter. The argument continues. I take it that my beliefs are true. But other people have different beliefs and some would affirm that my beliefs are false. Since, relativism says, their beliefs are true (for them), my beliefs are false. So, if my beliefs are true, they are false. If they are false, they are false. So, relativism cannot stand. Protagoras' famous dictum "man is the measure" was, thus, considered to have been refuted.

But, the thesis put here never claimed that just any belief is right and certainly not that any belief is true. A belief is only right within an actual world. If we have similar actual worlds, we can discuss beliefs (and we do). As a result of such a discussion, one (or both) of us may change our beliefs and, thus, our actual world. But I am not obliged to accept that my belief is wrong just because someone says it is. If I classify bats as mammals and you classify them as birds, while I classify cassowaries as birds and you do not, that does not mean that cassowaries are both birds and not birds or that bats are both mammals and not mammals. It simply means that in your actual world cassowaries are not birds and bats are, but in mine this is not so.

---

157 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1007b.

158 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1009a and Plato, *Theaetetus*, 170a.

An actual world is a self-contained construct. Judgments, thus, are only valid within such a world. I am at liberty to assert that an absolutist thesis is wrong without compromising my own position, for I do not allow that any thesis whatsoever is acceptable. In particular, I must disallow absolutist theses. Nevertheless, absolutist theses have been popular for over two thousand years and, therefore, in some social circumstances, they must have something going for them. If you follow an absolutist thesis your judgments are enclosed within the world that you make and my beliefs are not (necessarily) in your construction; you will disagree with them. There is no failure if I assert a different thesis even if it is incompatible with yours. If our beliefs are too disparate, there may be a failure of communication. That is all.

But I may convince you to adopt my system. You may decide to classify cassowaries as birds and bats as mammals. That would change your actual world. Wittgenstein said that would happen by "persuasion".[159] This is because we do not believe isolated facts but "a whole system of propositions."[160] This is an important corollary of the thesis put here. A change in a system of beliefs is what Thomas Kuhn called a paradigm shift.[161] Of course, we do not normally use these terms for small changes such as this example; we reserve such terms for big conceptual changes.

Aristotle's argument is, therefore, not valid. It elides the idea of true (in a world) with true simpliciter. True and false can only have meaning within a world and not (necessarily) across worlds and are not, as has been argued, eternal or universal values. That is why the concept of rightness has been emphasised. The professor who asks students about atomic theory is, however, right to mark

---

159 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *On Certainty* (transl. Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe), Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969, no. 262, p. 264 and also no. 612, p. 616.

160 Ibid., no. 141, p. 145.

161 Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

students wrong, for the examination is being conducted against a certain perception of the world. That perception is that used and circulating among physicists (and many others) in which everything is made from elementary particles and so forth; the students, by enrolling in that subject, and the professor are all playing the same language game. This is also why, within a language game, we use the same classifications for bats and birds. It would be inconvenient, even silly, for us not to. We have already noted that we teach children to see the world the way we see it. Therefore, such details are not usually a difficulty.

All that the argument of Plato and Aristotle shows is that some of the most radical relativisms are not valid. I accept that, but the thesis put forward here is not one of those very radical theses (and neither can I know if Protagoras' thesis was). Joseph Margolis describes the longevity of their argument, what he calls "the persistent myth ... [that] it is impossible to formulate a [relativist] ... thesis consistently or coherently", as "extraordinary!"[162]

The second question that we need to consider here is: how relativist is the thesis I am putting forward? It is certainly not absolutist in that it allows many possibilities and denies that there is just one way the world must be. The term "relativism" covers a wide spectrum of possibilities. Anything that is not absolutist can be classified as relativist. Plato's theory is an absolutist one. The Forms dictate whether a bat is to be classified with the mammals or with the birds. Unfortunately, I have never met a Form so, even if there are Forms, I can never know anything about them. This is the endemic problem with absolutisms of all kinds. We must note that absolutisms claim to be correct to the exclusion of other ways of seeing the world; that is what it is to be absolutist. All absolutist theories claim to be the one true church. If one accepts Forms theory, for example, one cannot accept or allow others to think that some other absolutism is acceptable. In

---

162 Margolis, *The Truth About Relativism*, p. 1.

a like manner, there might be a god who dictates how things are, leaving us to guess as to his thinking.

Adherents of absolute theses can never know that they have hit upon the correct absolutism. One could take a Peircean view of truth,[163] but even this view of truth is simply an article of faith, namely faith that science is getting ever nearer, ever nearer, to the Truth. All we can ever do is to construct theories on the basis of the (limited) knowledge (which is to say, our experience) that we have. An absolutism must demonstrate that it is the truth and every absolutist system is, surely, fallible. A relativism is not committed to that enterprise. All it must do is demonstrate that the system proposed is reasonable. I think that has been done above and that a form of relativism such as ours has become the only tenable approach.

The thesis that I have proposed is certainly consistent with most relativisms (including the most radical forms of relativism). But it is quite compatible with a mild version such as that suggested here. It is possible that there is an (unknowable) eternal truth, but we can never know that we have found it. All our worldmaking efforts would then be attempts to hit the right theory. Only when every detail dovetailed into perfect fit, could we even suspect that we have the right theory (but we could not be sure). That is certainly not the case yet. All our approaches to the world have "holes" in them. So we are still making worlds and looking. Personally, I do not expect that we will ever be in a position to cease this activity.

As we have said, the approach to the world outlined in this chapter is a mild form of relativism and represents a sensible position for a human being in our circumstances to take. At worst, this approach is pragmatic, in the terms that

---

163 See Christopher Hookway, *Peirce,* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985 for an introduction to Peirce's theories.

William James described.[164] Margolis seems to agree that relativist theses are the only candidates for being acceptable theories, while Harrè and Krausz, in *Varieties of Relativism,*[165] argue that it is not possible (probably not ever) to decide between the two broad schools of relativism and absolutism. Perhaps we do not need to.

Neither, of course, need this thesis imply any kind of Lockean epistemology.[166] The thesis is quite compatible with the notion that the mind is a *tabula rasa*, but it is also compatible with a wider range of possibilities than just that. In fact, as has been suggested, this thesis argues that worldmaking is a dialectic activity requiring the worldmaker to engage actively with the world, rather than simply waiting for the world to inscribe its message. It is certainly compatible with Kantian approaches to knowledge and also with modern approaches which, for example, argue that the mind is predisposed, perhaps by the human species' evolutionary past, to see the world in certain ways. It is consistent with theories, such as those of Mark Bickhard,[167] which describe our manner of learning and acquiring knowledge as interactive. We have not put forward any detailed programme for such matters and many alternatives fall within the limits outlined here.

---

164 William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for some Old Ways of Thinking together with Four Related Essays Selected from The Meaning of Truth,* New York: Longmans, Green, 1946.

165 Rom Harré and Michael Krausz, *Varieties of Relativism.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

166 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (ed. Roger Woolhouse), London: Penguin, 1997.

167 Mark H. Bickhard, "How Does the Environment Affect the Person?", in L. T. Winegar and J. Valsiner, *Children's Development within Social Contexts: Metatheoretical, Theoretical and Methodological Issues*, 1992, pp. 63-92.

Linguistic Relativity

I want to conclude this discussion of worldmaking by briefly considering the views of Benjamin Lee Whorf.

Whorf put forward a view of the role of language in formulating thought, commonly known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The hypothesis is that language determines the way we think. At first blush, this is exactly what has been argued. Sapir and Whorf were linguists and their hypothesis is based upon linguistic considerations. It is not always clear just what Whorf means. He quotes his teacher, Edward Sapir, at the head of one of his essays; we will take this to summarise his position. So, I will quote this item in full:

> Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. It is quite an illusion to imagine that one adjusts to reality essentially without the use of language and that language is merely an incidental means of solving specific problems of communication or reflection. The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. ... We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation.[168]

Certainly, Whorf is suggesting that the language we use significantly affects how we see the world; that is to say, how we see our actual world. Further, he talks of the world that we inhabit as a result of using language, what he calls "habitual thought worlds".[169] This much we must accept. However, our thesis recognises the dialectical nature of this process. I have argued that the language we use is

---

168 Benjamin Lee Whorf, *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf* (ed. John B. Carroll), Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, Cambridge, 1956, quoting Edward Sapir, p. 134.

169 Ibid., p. 147.

developed along with our understanding of the world and that we then use our language to symbolise that world. I have further recognised that we are taught language as infants and, in the process, we are taught to see the world in particular ways. It seems that Whorf is claiming more than this.

We should note that Whorf's argument proceeds mainly from a comparison of European languages such as English, French, German, which he labels SAE (Standard Average European) with the American Indian Hopi language. He maintains that the concepts which undergird these different languages (the European languages on the one hand and the Hopi language on the other) are very different, so different that their speakers inhabit different "thought worlds".

Of course, different vocabularies segment the world in different ways. But we know we are not totally restricted by them. We see a beautiful colour. Perhaps it has no name (in our vocabulary). We say, "it is part way between blue and green". If we see it often, we will give that hue a name, perhaps "aqua" or "turquoise". This is how vocabularies expand. We need a new word so we coin one. But Whorf claims more than just a vocabulary related issue. He claims that the whole structure of a language predisposes one to see the world in a way that underlies the structure of the language. I agree. However, a careful consideration of the hypothesis and what it (may) entail, will repay us a dividend as it will allow us here to clarify exactly what is being claimed for language and what interpretations of Sapir-Whorf are consistent with the current thesis and what are not.

I want to take issue with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, not so much as to argue with or even to clarify Whorf's claims but, rather, to clarify the claims made by this thesis. Many commentators have taken issue with Whorf and, rather than argue with Whorf directly, I will take up their discussion of the matter as being clearer and more lucid. If they have misunderstood Whorf, that will not affect this discussion.

Max Black[170] claimed that the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis entails a number (ten) of consequences. Black does not adduce reasons for suggesting that these consequences flow from the hypothesis but merely states them. We will take Black's claim at face value and examine his "summary" of Sapir-Whorf. The ten "consequences" are:

(1) A language embodies an integrated way of speaking, "covert categories" or ways of talking about, for example, time, that provides a metaphysic.

(2) and (3) A language embodies a distinctive conceptual system and that it imposes a world view on the speaker.

(4) and (5) The background linguistic system (partly) determines the associated conceptual system and the associated world view.

(6) Experience consists of a flux of impressions. Black comments that this flux is roughly equivalent to "'James' stream of thought.'"[171]

(7) and (8) "Facts" are a function of the language.

(9) and (10) Grammar and logic do not reflect reality but vary arbitrarily.

Our concern is to consider how far we need to take this line of thinking. According to Black, Whorf is making very strong claims indeed and we need not go as far as that. Let us, now, consider Black's summary:

(1) It is obvious that it is the case that a language prescribes categories. Black agrees that language functions to do this, but questions that it prescribes a metaphysic. Apart from the question of a metaphysic, which is independent of this work, this claim accords with our findings.

---

170 Max Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962, pp. 245-246.

171 Ibid., p. 255.

(2) and (3) Again, this thesis argues that a language does, indeed, entail a conceptual system. That conceptual system can always be modified as the user of the schema becomes more discerning. To break free of that schema would usually require the language user to provide a new (linguistic) schema to replace, or modify, the earlier one. With that caveat, this work also supports this claim.

(4) and (5) This thesis also entails this consequence but also with the caveat put above.

(6) Black accepts that experience does consist of such a flux and this thesis is, as we have noted, independent of this epistemological consideration. It is consistent with what seems to be, at one level, at least, an acceptable position.

(7) and (8) I have argued that the facts must be presented in the language we use and, so, are constrained by what can be said. Further, I have argued that facts are made not discovered. In one system it is a fact that a cassowary is a bird; in another it is a fact that a cassowary is not a bird.

(9) and (10) These consequences are self-evidently ridiculous and this thesis has consistently argued against any notion of arbitrariness in making worlds, either actual worlds or story-worlds. Worlds must fit experience and, so, cannot vary arbitrarily.

Devitt and Sterelny argue that Whorf is wrong because languages can be translated.[172] They cite Whorf's own "translations" of Hopi against him. They argue that, since the languages (Hopi and SAE) are intertranslatable, they cannot be incommensurable and, therefore, it is not true to say that they support different

---

172 Michael Devitt and Kim Sterelny, *Language and Reality: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Language* 2nd ed., Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1999. See especially chapters 10 and 12.

world views. Whorf himself provides "translations" of concepts. But such translations may only be approximations (which Whorf also claims). Quine, we will remember suggests that languages are not (necessarily) intertranslatable.[173]

Of course, it may be the case that all (human) languages are, in fact, commensurate. This does not imply that all must be. Further, even if it is the case that human beings are, in some sense, all equipped to see things similarly, that does not, as we have already noted, demonstrate that the thesis is wrong. I have argued that we see the world differently; this is trivially true at a suitable level of detail but also that there can be large differences in how we see things. Such differences may be illustrated by the differences between the Hopi language and SAE (I think Whorf makes out a good case on that issue, if I take, as I must, his claims about Hopi to be accurate). But of course, that human beings can and do have different thought worlds is also illustrated by, for example, the differences in thought patterns between the Middle Ages and today. This difference is not dictated (solely) by the language used — for the language used then is basically the same as that used now. The difference in thought patterns is dictated by how the language is used, that is to say, by what sentences we would utter or be prepared to affirm.

We have rejected Black's items (9) and (10) and, if Whorf affirms them (which I doubt), I disagree with him. I have certainly not argued that our actual worlds are arbitrary but that they are, or may be, different. The differences arise from different ways of assembling experience (and from the different experiences we have). We interact with the world and we make our actual world accordingly. There is no arbitrariness in that. Our actual world must be (reasonably) consistent with that experience. The making of actual worlds is a dialectical activity.

---

173 Quine, *Word and Object.*

Conclusion

I will, in the next chapter draw out further the implications of the approach I have outlined here, for the making of both fictional and actual worlds. It should be obvious that this thesis endows each of us with an active creativity. Understanding the world is a creative thing. Art and science, of course, but also our basic understanding of things, enter into a grand human creative capacity. I will close this chapter with a final quote from Goodman:

> [E]ffective representation and description require invention. They are creative. They inform each other; and they form, relate, and distinguish objects. That nature imitates art is too timid a dictum. Nature is a product of art and discourse.[174]

---

174 Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*, Indianapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1968, p. 33.

CHAPTER 4

Being There

In the preceding three chapters, we have followed two major strands of thought: one relating to the way we interpret a story-text and the other relating to the way we interpret our experience of the world. It is now time to put those two strands together. I want, in this chapter, to consider some of the similarities and differences between a story-world and an actual world and the ways these things are made. Many of the similarities will be obvious and I have already noted that there are a great many of both. A clear understanding of some of these similarities and some of the differences between story-worlds and actual worlds will be important to an understanding of our reactions to stories, so these differences will need to be clearly spelled out. There is no need for a comprehensive review of all the similarities and differences between story-worlds and actual worlds. Such a review would probably be impossible; the more one considers them, the more similarities one keeps finding. Even if it were possible, it would certainly be tedious to catalogue them. We will, therefore, concentrate our attention upon those distinctions and similarities that are important to our problem. However, before we do that, it would be best to briefly summarise where we now stand.

In the first chapter we considered the idea of a story-world as the subject of mimetic representation. This idea provided us with a renewed way of understanding Aristotle's *Poetics* and reviving the notion that a story is mimetic in some important way. In the case of a story, the mimesis is presented to us as a

text (a term we have been using inclusively). A text is, of course, itself presented in a symbolic form. We read that text and we make a story-world from it; that is what it is to interpret the text. The story-world is the locus of the action and it is the story-world which the text represents. But story-worlds are not uniquely derived from the text, because some texts are capable of sustaining more than one interpretation. The text may not represent a unique story-world because different readers may make different story-worlds from the same text. The story-world is, therefore, an interpretation of a text by a reader. In trivial ways, readers will make different story-worlds from the same text, but we also discovered that readers can, and do, make very different story-worlds from the same text. To the extent that such different interpretations of a text do no undue violence to the text, they must be counted as legitimate interpretations. The making of the story-world and the reading of a text operate as a dialectic, often called a hermeneutic circle. Gadamer, quoting Heidegger, says that the circle is not, however, "vicious" but is, rather, an aid and an indispensable part of understanding.[175] We read the text and start making the story-world. But as we make the story-world, we start to read the text in a particular way. On the other hand, we must make the story-world in terms dictated by the text. To make the story-world in ways not supported by the text would be to treat the text violently.

In the third chapter we considered the way we make actual worlds by interpreting our experience of the world. The world is presented to us through experience. Just as we must make sense of a text, so we must make sense of that experience. We symbolise that experience (often into language, but, perhaps, into some other symbolic form). When we do this, we come to see the world in a particular way. That is to say, we make an actual world. An actual world is, thus, an interpretation of our experience into a description of the world. We describe that world in a manner that also operates as a dialectic. As we describe the world a certain way, we come to see it that way. Thus, in very general terms, an actual

---

175 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 266.

world represents the world. Similar experiences may be capable of supporting more than one actual world. This is trivially so, in the sense that we each experience different things. This may be true in a deeper sense, in that even the same experience could lead to the making of (radically) different actual worlds.

These parallel world making activities are illustrated in the following diagrammatic manner:

The Author?	The Text	Reading (which is an experience)	Story-world Making	Symbolising the Story-world
God?	The World	Experience	Actual World Making	Symbolising the Actual World

The text may or may not have an author (we have already discussed the unlikely texts written by the sea on the sand). This thesis is about reading rather than writing so, for our purposes, the text is given. Similarly, the world may or may not have a creator (God). But, again, the thesis is not about creating the world but about experiencing it and interpreting that experience. These two aspects of the diagram are shown greyed out.

But, we can clearly see the parallels between reading the text and making a story-world on the one hand, and experiencing the world and making an actual world on the other. The making of an actual world is the activity of symbolising experience. This is also true of a story-world. A story-world is given in symbolic form and an actual world comes into being (because it is a description of the world) by being put into a symbolic form. Hence, the line between these two in the diagram is shown as permeable, or dotted. To make a world, actual or non-actual, is to symbolise that world.

The text is given to us as a symbolic thing (it is written) but it is in making a story-world that we bring the text to life. The text, *qua* text, is inert, and if we read it without comprehension (because it is written in a language we do not understand or because it is complex or because we are tired and the words pass straight through) we do not read any story, merely a collection of words. It is brought to life when we read with comprehension.

When we read a novel, we make the objects that it depicts (places such as Rosings and characters such as Elizabeth Bennet) as inhabitants of the story-world. We make the events that are described (events such as Lady Catherine's visit to the Bennets) as events taking place in the story-world. Again, there is a dialectic in operation. As we make the things in the story, we refer to the things that we have made. This is also what we do with the population of the actual world. The objects in a story, the characters, places and events, are real in the story-world. The objects in an actual world are not real in the story-world (Elizabeth cannot know about me or you, for example)

We make the denizens of the story-world from the experience of reading the text. We may make things that we would not expect to meet in our actual world. Story-worlds can contain ghosts, unicorns, hobbits, fairies, damsels in distress, knights, astronauts and people such as you and me. Some of these things are the sorts of things that populate our actual worlds, while others, so far as we are aware, are not. Many people believe there are things in the actual world that others do not accept are there at all: ghosts, fairies and the Loch Ness Monster are possible examples.

The things in the story-world are real in the story-world. The ghost in the Hamlet story-world (assuming that the reader has made the world such that there is a ghost in it) is real in the Hamlet story-world. But, with a simple proviso noted below, is not real in most actual worlds. The things in my actual world are real (for me). They may not be in your actual world. I might believe in Santa Claus; he is real

(for me) in my actual world: he delivers gifts and so forth. But you may have made your actual world differently; your actual world may be one that excludes Santa Claus (for whatever reason). I act in my actual world. That acting may have significant consequences. Any ghosts that populate my actual world are real in my actual world (they may not be in yours).

Reference is a dialectical activity. We start to single things out in order to make a world. We do this in the actual world as we learn to talk. As we experience more and more, we make more and more subtle things. But, as we make things, we talk about those things and build up a more and more sophisticated picture. We do the same when we read a text.

> "My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?"[176]

This conversation is almost the first thing we read in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. But, straight away, we start to make the denizens of the story-world. As we read more, we increase the precision of our making. We learn more and more about the characters (Mr. and Mrs. Bennet) and we learn more about the residence, Netherfield Park. But as soon as we encounter Mr. and Mrs. Bennet we start making, and we do this dialectically also. Even from the first we start to make with some care. Netherfield Park, just from its name, we take to be a residence of some significance in the district (and we will turn out, as we learn more, to have been correct). We will also start to make Mr. and Mrs. Bennet in certain ways. By the time we have finished reading the novel, we will have had all the experience of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet and also of Netherfield Park that the novel can afford (for that is all that is written). We may finish making the Pride and Prejudice story-world at that point. But we may continue to work on the story-world, and mull over it, over a lengthy period of time. Usually, we are able, with a story, to reread the text (repeat the experience) should we wish to.

---

176 Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (ed. Vivien Jones), London: Penguin Books, 1996, p. 5.

However, in no case can we ever (quite) repeat the experience the same as our first experience. If we reread the text, we come to it with different expectations and preconceptions; we may be reading for certain specific details and so on. By the same token, if we reexperience something in our actual world, that experience can never be quite the same as it was before; it can never be a simple repetition of our first experience. A second ride on the roller coaster is different from a first.

In both cases we make things on "hearsay". We make the story-world from what the text tells us. But much of our experience of our actual world is "hearsay". People tell us things, we read information in the newspaper or a book; we see pictures or television broadcasts and so forth. We take it to be so, and make our actual world accordingly. Much of what we make, as existing in our actual world, places such as Bourke, people such as the queen, we make on this sort of indirect evidence.

Ontologically, this makes story-worlds and actual worlds to be very similar. They are both intentional objects, objects made from, in the broadest meaning of the term, ideas. We will see that this implies that we will talk of stories and react to them in natural ways.

Being There

What, then, is the difference between an actual world and a story-world?

The difference is this. We inhabit our actual world; we live there and die there; we do things (including reading stories) there. Events and things in our actual world can affect us and we can alter our actual world and be altered by it. We can trip over a stone we hadn't noticed. We can move a stone. If we move a stone,

we alter the world and, therefore, our actual world, perhaps only slightly; if we trip over the stone, we also alter the world, for the world is different as a result of our tripping. Some actions we take and some actions that happen (without our being the cause) can alter our world significantly (for us). An event happening somewhere else in the world can affect us. There may be a cyclone in Queensland which causes high seas in Sydney. We may drown in the rough surf. But we, ourselves, may be able to alter our actual world significantly (for us) by, for example, moving to a new town, getting married, having children and so forth. An alteration in our actual world leads to the having of experiences different from those we would have had if the world had not been altered. These alterations to our experiences may be extensive or trivial. That is what it means to describe some event as insignificant. Getting married leads to a great number of different experiences and is usually considered significant. Kicking a stone leads to only minor experiential differences. Falling over a stone (perhaps a stone we had failed to notice) and breaking a leg also leads to a series of different experiences. It may even lead to death. Of course, there are practical limits to the ways in which we can alter the world. We cannot remove a star. We usually cannot remove a building that is spoiling our view.

We can reinterpret a text to make a different story-world, and we can reinterpret our experience to make a different actual world. We do both these things constantly; we must always appraise and reappraise our experience and we must always be open to something in a text that forces us to reconsider the story-world. But reinterpreting the text does not alter the text, although it does alter the story-world. Neither does reinterpreting our experience change the (raw) experience; but if I reinterpret my experience to change my actual world, then I am changed. Since I am a denizen of my actual world, technically, any change in me (including a change in my beliefs or how I see things) is a change in the world itself. So to reinterpret our experience does change our actual world, perhaps only in a small way. But such a change to my actual world may lead to significant consequences (at least for me, and, possibly, for other people also).

Simply put, we can change the world but not the text.

In an actual world, we can conduct experiments to obtain additional information. An experiment may be an elaborate scientific activity involving huge expense and many hours of work on the part of many people. Or it may be very simple. If we deliberately take steps to obtain additional information (that is to say, have certain sorts of experiences), then we are conducting an experiment in this sense. Looking behind the door is an experiment. So is sending a rocket to Mars. We can then use this additional information to assist us in making our actual world. In a story-world, this is not possible for us. The characters can look behind the door, but we cannot unless they do it for us. Further, we cannot even ask them to look.

We can never find out how many children Lady Macbeth had, because we cannot ask her. The story tells us what it tells us, and that is all. There is no experiment that we can run. But, we may be able to find out how many children our neighbour has. We may observe the family, the comings and goings to and from their house, who is there frequently, their ages and so forth (we can hardly not do those things) and we can talk to them. If we really want to know and do not obtain a satisfactory answer, we may be able to conduct further experiments. But there are strict limits to what we can find out even about our actual world. We can almost certainly never find out what Caesar had for breakfast on the day he crossed the Rubicon. We can probably not find out what our neighbour had for breakfast two weeks ago. There is no experiment that we can conduct to obtain the information about Caesar. Possibly, we could ask our neighbour about his morning habits, but he may not remember what he ate and when, himself. We suppose that information was once available but it is not any longer.

The incompleteness of story-worlds is a problem to some commentators. Currie, for example, argues that fictional worlds are incomplete (or, at least, incompletely described) and, possibly, inconsistent. Therefore, he argues, they (may not be) possible worlds. This thesis agrees on both counts. He then goes on to say that,

because of their indeterminacy, fictional worlds (or story-worlds, in our terms) are an unacceptable construct.[177] As outlined above, we do not agree that follows and it does not present the kind of difficulty that Currie seems to think. We have seen that this incompleteness is an incompleteness of information and need not be understood as implying that any story-world is, itself, incomplete. A newspaper report of an incident is, as we have already noted, incomplete, but that is not to say that the world of the incident about which the article is written is incomplete or that we can (readily) obtain just any piece of information we desire. Ruth Lorand[178] argues, similarly, that story-worlds are the material about which the story is written, but the inscription (that is to say, the text) cannot tell everything. But then, neither can the newspaper article.

There is a strict parallel here. The world may be determinate. It may even be consistent. But I have argued that even if this is so, actual worlds are not determinate; we cannot know everything about anything. Even consistency may not reign supreme for, as we have seen, our formulation of the world to make an actual world may be, and almost certainly will be, inconsistent. A story-world may not be consistent either. Inconsitency may be irremedial.

Following this, we might argue that we have no warrant for asserting as "facts" things about the incident that the newspaper fails to report. This is clearly so. We might argue that, in a like manner, we have no warrant for asserting as "facts" about the story-world things that are not identifiable from the text. So we could suggest or speculate that Lady Macbeth had, say, three children; but we could not assert that as a fact. We often do speculate about newspaper reports (probably drunk, we say when we read about an accident).

---

177 Currie, *The Nature of Fiction,* pp. 54-55.

178 Ruth Lorand, "Telling a Story or Telling a World?" in *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 41, (2001), pp. 425-443.

Our act of reading takes place in our actual world. We cannot influence a story but the story, or rather the experience of reading that story, may influence us. We cannot "reach into" the story, so to speak, to influence events or to obtain information beyond what we are given in the text (by the author). The characters in the story are oblivious of us and our existence, whereas we are not oblivious to them. Their activities can affect us and the story can affect us, for the act of reading takes place, as we have said, in our actual world. We could describe the story as existing, in isolation, within our actual world.

We have discussed consistency. We expect both a story-world and an actual world to be consistent. If they are not, we usually attempt to reinterpret the text to make a consistent story-world and we usually attempt to reinterpret our experience to make a consistent actual world. But we may not succeed in doing that. Then we may simply live with the problem. We can throw away the book if we find it becomes too inconsistent (and who wants to bother to read a story that is an inconsistent mish-mash?) but we can hardly discard our actual world (we can by dying). We have a very great capacity to both extend what we perceive and to overlook difficulties in our understanding of things. And, as already stated, we cannot always know what is possible or contradictory. Suspension of belief is not usually difficult.

However, most of us can happily live with fictional worlds that are strange; a strange world need not, of course, be inconsistent. A strange world is a world that seems to be unlike our actual world in certain ways. It is not possible to say in exactly what ways. Many people like story-worlds to be strange (science fiction and fantasy stories are popular). Usually we take it that the story-world is like our actual world (at least on a first reading of an unfamiliar work). We may know something about the story and already have some expectations before commencing to read. For example, we know that *Pride and Prejudice* was written two hundred years ago and we expect it to go certain ways. So, before we start reading, the conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet has a certain

"background". We may be forced, as we read, to alter our understanding. The story-world may turn out to be quite strange. Often we can know that the story-world is strange as soon as the story commences. We do not need to get far into Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* to know that the story-world is strange.

As we read we fill out our (skimpy) knowledge with details from the story. The creation of a world from a story is a microcosmic activity paralleling the worldmaking that we bring to our lives as a totality. If unexpected events (such as men awakening to find that they are insects) or odd characters (such as moles spring cleaning) appear in the story-world, we quickly modify the story-world as we make it, to take account of such things. We must do this to make the story-world fit the text, that is, to make a right world from the text.

Sometimes we know that a story-world will be unlike our actual world because of the genre of the work. We expect a certain kind of world, or we stand ready to make a certain kind of story-world, when we read a science fiction story, for example. We might accept time travel as a (conventional) possibility within the science fiction genre world, but we do not expect it in a Gothic romance. Unless we are told otherwise, we take it that the fictional world matches our experience of our actual world. Stories come in many different genres: science fiction, fantasy, surreal, realistic and so forth. We have taken little account of these differences. There is much that could be said but little that needs to be said here. The claim I am making is that the thesis being argued will cover all these genres.

There is not one right way that an actual world must be. Neither is there one right way that the world of the text must be. But we must always make the story-world from the text and, therefore, it must fit the text. Since we start from an understanding of our actual world it is not unusual for our expectations of the actual world to reflect on our interpretation of a text and, as I will argue in a later chapter, vice versa.

We will investigate the impact (if any) of an unsatisfactory story-world later. However, if we make our actual world badly, the impact may be disastrous. If we do not construct an actual world where gravity (however we understand that term) operates, we will fall (out of trees, down steps). We probably would not survive very long. Most of us, we have already noted, have gaps and errors in our actual world. As a consequence we may not operate optimally.

What is a Fiction?

We are now in a position to say something about the categories of fiction and non-fiction. This question could not be considered earlier because we lacked the machinery to discuss it. We now have that machinery.

Earlier we defined a story as something with a plot; something where events occur and occur in a sequence. That definition is very general and covers stories of all kinds including "true" stories, such as history, gossip, newspaper reports and so forth (to the extent that any of these is "true"). Librarians, however, divide stories into two sorts: fiction and non-fiction. My discussion to date has ignored this kind of distinction, although the discussion has tended to concentrate its attention on stories as if they were fictions, by implication if not overtly. Many philosophers start their philosophising with a consideration of fictionality. We certainly started by asking questions about fictions, but the analysis that we have been making has not depended upon any definition of fiction.

There are two commonsense requirements for something to be a fiction: most people will say that fiction must be "not true" and that the story be, generally, understood to be a fictional story (there is an intentional requirement). A lie is not (an innocent) fiction because it is intended to deceive the person being lied to in

some manner. I might be selling something and lie about its quality, or I might lie to protect myself. Such lies are not fiction in that the reader of the lies is not intended to make a story-world, separate from this world, but to believe that the facts are about this world; the lie is intended to cause the reader to make an error of judgment: buy the object or exonerate the guilty, for example. Many people argue that something written as a fiction, but gratuitously factual, would still be a fiction because of this intentional requirement.

In the terms of this thesis, we can see that the difference between fiction and non-fiction is one of the relationship between actual and story worlds. In the case of a fiction, the story-world is separate from any actual world, where, in the case of a non-fiction, the story-world is (or claims to be) a spatio-temporal part of an actual world. Sometimes, the story-world seems to be about actual world entities, such as Napoleon; we will visit that question later in this thesis. A lie, of course, claims to be about an actual world. A fiction that was, accidentally, true, is written about (and interpreted to be about) a story-world and not an actual world (as we have just said).

Most writers recognise that there is nothing special about the language of a fiction. Curry points out that "it is not any linguistic or semantic feature of the text that determines its fictionality."[179] Many writers define fictionality as arising from an action of the author. Thus a fiction is defined in terms of authorial intent. In the passage just quoted Curry continues to observe that "nor is it anything to do with the reader's response."[180] It is, he continues, "to do with the kind of action the author performs in producing the text."[181]

Currie holds that a fiction is a kind of speech act. In this he is in agreement, one way or another, with many commentators. This thesis can find no fault with such

---

179 Currie, *The Nature of Fiction*, p. 12.

180 Ibid.

181 Ibid.

a stance. To produce a text which represents a story-world is a kind of act; that act is different from the kind of act which produces a text about this world. To perform an act of fiction making places different obligations on the author from the kind of act which produces, say, a history story-text. But this thesis argues that it is the world that the text represents which makes the difference. Thus, an act of fiction writing is an act where the author represents a certain sort of world.

It is equally clear that one can read a work as fiction even if it is intended to be true. This is almost universally acknowledged. Currie says that "[j]ust about anything can be read as fiction",[182] although he continues by asserting that that does not make it fiction. Lamarque, similarly, points out that "the attitude that a reader takes to a work need not coincide with that of the writer";[183] he also continues to argue that it is the writer who determines fictionality.

Any story is, when interpreted by a reader, used to make a story-world. Any story is about events either in the past or, in some other way, beyond change. This statement is true of anything that is in the past or anything classified as fiction (even if set in the future). It may not be true of predictions (about which I will say a little later). Neither might it be true of a story which is current (in the sense that it is happening right now) but we do not tend to think of an adventure in which we are at this moment participating, as a story. I could hardly be telling it as it happens, and, so, we can exclude such possibilities.[184]

I may criticise a fictional story on the grounds that it is silly, poorly written, unrealistic and so forth. I may not criticise it on the grounds that it is made up or "not true". I can, however, criticise a history on that latter ground. So this is the difference. A story-world is self-enclosed and complete, be it a history or a fiction

---

182 Ibid., p. 36.

183 Lamarque, *Fictional Points of View*, p. 25.

184 Although we may, of course, think that our current adventure will make a good story (our holiday account when we get home, for example).

(for it is unalterable). An historical account of something does allow more information to be obtained; I have already called activities intended to obtain additional information, experiments. We can conduct historical experiments by, for example, perusing relevant documents, possibly questioning witnesses. We can read more "stories" about the times and events in an effort, through more comprehensive information, to make judgments about the veracity of matters as presented by any one author. To the extent to which we do that, we are not treating the work as a story. When we read a work as a story, we make the story-world as an interpretive act. If we evaluate that world against other sources of information, we are not treating it as a story but as something to be investigated. Similarly, if we conduct some sort of comparative investigation of the novels of a particular author, say D. H. Lawrence, we are carrying out a critical analysis. To do any of these things requires, *inter alia*, the making of the story-world, but the historical investigation or the literary critique, goes beyond that (and beyond the scope of this thesis).

So, if we treat a text as a story (and that is where our interest lies — making sense of stories) we make a story-world. The distinction between fact and fiction is not greatly important to us. What we read depends upon our attitude to its story-world and our actual world. Thus, the difference lies, not with the librarian, but with the reader. If I read a story as fiction then, for the purposes of that reading, it is fiction. Certain texts are very powerful as stories. I will discuss that matter in a later chapter. Other stories are powerful because they tell us about how things are (or were thought to be). An excellent example is a religious text like The Bible. This text can be read as a factual account of how things were and how they came to be the way they are. In the process, it may give us spiritual guidance. But the text can also be read as a fiction. In that case, the story may still operate as a powerful story and give us spiritual guidance. We will see how this might be, in a later chapter.

The question of fact versus fiction will recur throughout this chapter. We have now laid out the theory and we are in a position to continue our discussion.

Emotion and Stories

We are now in a position to begin to answer one of the important questions with which we set out. Why do we get involved with the characters in a story? Why do we scream at a horror film? Why do we cry for Anna Karenina? If we are genuinely frightened by the green slime on the cinema screen, why do we not run from the cinema? We will give an answer to this question now, but it will be necessary to elaborate that answer further, near the end of this thesis.

Why does not the hick in the audience run onto the stage and save the heroine from the wheels of the train, asks Kendall Walton.[185] Since the play is representing the story-world, but the performance takes place in this world, that would merely be to disrupt the performance. The story-world would not be affected. Perhaps the performance would be brought to a premature end; that might result in the audience's not seeing the whole play and being deprived of the opportunity to complete their making of the story-world. The performance is an event in the world; as such, it can be interrupted or fail. An actor might have an accident. At the end, the audience applauds. The applause is for the performers and others associated with the production; the applause takes place in this world. But the performance represents the story-world and, in the story-world, the heroine is at serious risk of death from the wheels of the train. The actress in the performance is, we know, at no such risk. Sometimes an author or a director

attempts to draw the audience into the action of the play. Then the audience would have to incorporate the whole performance, including their own rôle, into their interpretation of the play and that action would become part of the story-world (for them). There is no intrinsic reason why we cannot make a story-world from a production in which we play a part. However, we usually try to keep the story-world and our actual world from becoming mixed up in this manner.

We make a story-world. We "look into" that world and we see the characters and their situations. We see the lives of those characters develop and we see what happens in that world. We experience emotions as we would in any similar situation. We scream with fear, we gasp with surprise, we glow with an inner warmth, we cry for Anna Karenina. This is not illogical. There is no need to see such behaviour as peculiar. These are, I claim, real emotions, just like those we feel in response to situations that arise in our actual world. Sometimes these emotions are more strongly felt than emotions we feel in response to situations in our actual world and sometimes less strongly felt. This is our commonsense reaction to our feelings about stories.

As a rough rule (and it is very rough), the strength of our reaction to an emotional situation is partly, at least, dependent on our "distance" from that situation. If we are far away and do not know those involved, we do not react as strongly as if we are close or if we know those involved. If we know them well, we react more strongly. So, for example, we react most strongly to situations involving those we know and love: our family and friends. The deaths of these people are most likely to evoke very strong emotions. We hardly spare a thought for those killed in an earthquake on the other side of the world in a country where we do not know the people. The "distance" is even greater where the people are members of a social

---

185 Kendall L. Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990, p.192.

grouping with whom we have had no contact. Any journalist setting up news headlines knows this.

We read *Anna Karenina*. We become intimate with Anna. We know her thoughts and her problems. We become close to her. When she commits suicide, of course we are sorry. We have come to know her well, much better than we know the people we read about in the newspaper.

Why, then, do we take no steps to try and save her? The answer is simple: we are unable to assist her because, however strongly we feel, we do not live in her world. We are unable to alter that world. Walton asks why, if we are afraid of the green slime on the cinema screen, do we take no action? The answer is just that we do not need to take any action. This is not to say that we do not feel real fear. There is an implication in much of the writing on emotional responses to stories that we must run if we are afraid. But this is based on an erroneous suggestion: that we must always react to real fear with flight. It is, quite simply, not so.

If we are afraid of something we usually do take some action to allay our fear. If we walk through a gate and are attacked by a savage dog, it is natural to quickly retreat and bang the gate shut. But flight might not always be the most appropriate action; many animals freeze when confronted with danger. We may sit very still and hope that we will not be detected. If we have a big stick handy we may use it or we may grab such a stick. In broad terms, it is the rational instinct that decides what reaction will be most appropriate in any given circumstance. Emotions are not themselves actions but may give rise to actions. Yet, very often, we take no specific action in response to our emotions. Our rational reaction to the emotion provoking situation may go some way towards allaying our emotion. I equip myself with a big stick; I still fear the savage dog but not as much as before I was holding tight to the stick. When the dog rushes at me I still feel the grip of fear, but not as much as if I were defenceless. I may not, now, run.

Eddy Zemach says this: "for rational adults, emotion is never a cause of action; rather it gives one a reason to act in a certain way."[186] We think before we act; to run onto the stage in the melodrama would not be rational. To run from the cinema in fear of the green slime would not be rational. We cannot always control ourselves; tears may well up as we read *Anna Karenina*, but we remain rational enough not to run to the railway station. The tragedy gives us a reason to act that way (namely, to cry) but the sorrow does not cause us to rush to the railway station. If we can do nothing, then there is nothing we can do. This is the case for Anna; our pity would be a reason to assist her, if we could. But we cannot, so we do what we can: nothing. Again, Zemach says that the "fact that Stalin can cause no more harm — he is dead — is a reason against trying to stop him but not a good reason against hating him."[187] Neither, he says, is the fact that a person has died a reason to stop loving him. We are often in a position where we are unable to assist, however much we would like to be able to. We often hear news items that make us feel genuine pity (perhaps in response to some tragedy or disaster in an overseas country). Yet we do not take action (or, at least, not in every case — we could not do so). We pity Anna Karenina, yet our rationality counsels us to take no action. We are distressed by the plight of victims of a disaster, yet we take no action. In each case, it is real pity we feel; our inability to act does not imply that the pity is not genuine.

We attend a horror film at the cinema and see (on the screen) the green slime moving towards us. We feel fear; we decide what to do. We could run from the cinema, yet we do not do so, for we decide to sit there and "enjoy" our fear, for it is not unmixed. This does not make the fear any the less real fear. I allay my fear by saying to myself "the green slime is only in the world of the film — it can do me no harm" or perhaps I say, "everything will work out in the end — it always

---

186 Eddy Zemach, "Emotion and Fictional Beings", in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 54, (1996), p. 43.

187 Ibid., p. 44.

does." If the fear becomes overpowering, I may decide to leave the cinema (and miss the end of the film) in order to allay my fears. That might be rational. Lamarque suggests that the person attending the film presentation might take certain actions; he "might close his eyes and try to bring other things to mind."[188] Lamarque reports that such actions are, in fact, common among audiences at horror films.[189] Colin Radford suggests that we might become "so appalled at the prospect of what we think is going to happen ... [that we] avert the impending tragedy in the only way we can, by closing the book or leaving the theatre."[190] This may not be a common occurrence, but Radford states that it does happen. We do not usually take evasive action. This does not imply that those things and events do not arouse real emotions in us, but, on the contrary, suggests that the emotions aroused are as real as any others. It is a commonplace to observe that, often, people react with greater intensity of emotion about fictional characters than they do about those who inhabit the actual world.

We have a friend who has suffered a loss and we really feel sorry for him. What do we do? We may speak to him and offer our sympathy. Sometimes we judge that it is better to say nothing. Sometimes we do not quite know what to say or how to behave, so we do nothing. That is not to say that we do not feel real sympathy. Even if we have a friend who we know to be suicidal, we may not be able to do anything. That is the case with Anna. So we do nothing. In other words, it is simply not true that emotions must result in certain (predictable) actions. If I fall in love with Elizabeth Bennet, I shall have to endure the pangs, for she is unattainable!

Why do we cry for Anna, but pass over the plight of refugees, the starving and other people? We evince more sympathy for Anna than we do for someone

---

188 Lamarque, *Fictional Points of View,* p. 119.

189 Ibid.

190 Colin Radford, "How can we be Moved by the Fate of Anna Karenina", in Peter Lamarque, *Philosophy and Fiction*, 1983, p. 301-2.

nearby in a similar plight. We have noted that. We know Anna; we do not know (except as statistics) most of the refugees, or the starving. We do not know the person on the next block. We have spent many hours with Anna; we have read about her and been privy to her thoughts. We know her circumstances well. It is only natural that we will have more sympathy for her than for the person with whom we have no contact. It is as simple as that!

My argument is, quite simply, that our emotional reactions to stories are real reactions and the emotions we feel in response to stories are real emotions.

Many writers consider that our reactions to stories must, in some way, be false, because the situations and characters are not real. But this does not follow and seems to defy commonsense; they are real tears we shed for Anna. Kendall Walton describes our reactions to stories as "quasi".[191] He describes our emotions in the face of a story as "quasi" because, he reasons, we know that the events in the story are not real. We know that Anna will not "really" be killed by the train. Walton says that when we read a story, the story acts as a prop in a game of make believe. We "play" the game. In make-believe, we do not experience real emotions (because it is only make-believe). Therefore, he reasons, our reactions to stories are not genuine but "quasi".

According to Walton's account it is essential that, for an emotion to be real, it must be directed towards a real entity, that is to say, in the terms we are using, towards an entity that is a denizen of my actual world and not an entity that is a denizen of a story-world. We experience quasi-fear because we are not really in danger from the green slime on the cinema screen.[192] Of course, some reflection does allow us to moderate our fear, but, I am arguing that we experience real emotions when we are confronted by the situation in the story-world. It follows from the argument that I am putting that the events in the story are real (in the

---

191 Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, p. 244.

192 Ibid.

story-world). For the characters in the story-world, the events in my actual world are not "real". An event or a character or place can only be real in some, one world.

Zemach dismisses Walton's claims on two grounds. Firstly, he claims that Walton's logic is flawed.[193] Secondly, he argues that the fear experienced by the person attending the horror film at the cinema is accompanied by the normal signs (sweaty palms, an urge to escape, he clutches the chair tightly) of fear. Likewise, the pity is accompanied by the normal signs of pity (tears). These are genuine tears and genuine sweaty palms not "quasi tears" and "quasi sweaty palms". Therefore, he says that it is real fear. So do I. Other writers question the claim that fear cannot be real just because it is directed towards objects that are not real. Säätelä, who does not seem to question Kendall's use of the concept of make-believe, nevertheless, suggests that "we don't have to say that an emotion isn't fear just because its object is known to be fictional."[194] It is clear that we can feel fear for things that are not denizens of this world.

We will have more to say about imagination in the next chapter. But, it is convenient to note here that making story-worlds is an act of the imagination. That is hardly a contentious claim. In a recent book on imagination,[195] Currie and Ravenscroft argue that imagination is transparent to emotion.[196] They mean that imagined situations are productive of genuine emotions. They argue, as will we, that to decide between alternatives requires the imagining of those alternatives; therefore, a genuine emotional reaction to imagined situations is productive.[197]

---

193 Zemach, "Emotion and Fictional Beings", pp. 41-42.

194 Simo Säätelä, "Fiction, Make-Believe and Quasi Emotions", in *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 34, (1994), p. 31.

195 Gregory Currie and Ian Ravenscroft, *Recreative Minds: Imagination in Philosophy and Psychology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

196 Ibid., pp. 189-191.

197 Ibid., p.199.

Peter Lamarque argues, in a similar vein, that we can be frightened by a thought. This is undoubtedly so. He says that the thought of being mauled by a lion inspires genuine fear, even if no danger is apparent. We will also be afraid if we think about being stranded on a distant planet. It is, effectively, impossible for that to actually happen to us.[198] Lamarque sees fictional situations as akin to thoughts; the fear which responds to those thoughts is real fear and the pity which responds to those thoughts is real pity. "[W]hen we fear and pity fictional characters, our emotions are", he says, "directed at real, albeit psychological objects."[199] The objects which fill the story-world are, as intentional objects, just of this sort. And they are certainly vivid. We visit the story-world and we think about what we see there, just as we do about situations in our actual world. Under the scheme put forward in this thesis, thoughts about story-worlds and thoughts about actual worlds are very much alike.

There are, of course, other, related, questions arising from our responses to stories. We find ourselves in a state of suspense over the outcome of a story. This seems right on a first reading, but we seem to encounter suspense even when we read a story a second time and know what will happen. We enjoy horror films and, for many readers, the more gruesome, the better. These stories are more popular in the medium of film, for film is more "realistic". We attend the tragedy and we "enjoy" the experience. Why would we willingly put ourselves through the stress of, say *King Lear*. We will say more about the "benefits" of tragedy and this problem in a later chapter, but, here, I want to flag these as problems for stories and the theory put forward so far. These are merely some more of the perplexities of stories, but they are not greater problems for the thesis put forward here than for any other. Further, the answers to these problems may be psychological. We will restrict ourselves to showing how our thesis is compatible with some answers provided in the literature.

---

198 Lamarque, *Fictional Points of View*, p. 118.

199 Ibid., p. 121.

The question of monsters has been discussed by Noël Carroll and Berys Gaut, who have different approaches to the problem. Carroll argues that monsters are fascinating, while also being fearsome and disgusting.[200] "[F]ear and disgust are the price the audience pays for fascination."[201] Gaut argues that horror does not necessarily involve negative emotions and he suggests that there is a parallel with the kind of reaction we get in any "thrill" situation, such as mountain climbing or riding the roller coaster.[202] Our reactions contain a cognitive and an emotive element. That discussion centres around the question of the psychology of the enjoyment of these works (and, partly, about the literary merit of this particular genre): whether we can legitimately enjoy the monstrous or whether there is a fascination inherent in the spectacle of the horror film. In either case, the answers given are quite consistent with the argument put here. In fact, the solution offered by Carroll, who argues that there is a fascination inherent in the monster, is heightened by the prospect of peeking into the monster's world.

In like fashion there is a debate about suspense. Do we encounter real suspense on seeing the same film twice? Yanal, for example, argues that we do find that our first encounter with a story (that is, in our terms, our first visit to the story-world) engenders suspense. After that, when, in our terms, we revisit the story-world, and we all have favourite story-worlds and like to go there again and again, there is more a sense of anticipation than of genuine suspense.[203] We anticipate, in a suspenseful manner, undergoing some familiar ritual or going to a familiar place.

---

200 Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror,* New York: Routledge, 1990.

"Enjoying Horror Fictions: A Reply to Gaut", in *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 35, (1995), pp. 67-72.

201 Carroll, "Enjoying Horror Fictions", p. 67.

202 Berys Gaut, "The Paradox of Horror", in British Journal of Aesthetics, 33, (1993), pp. 333-345, Carroll, "Enjoying Horror Fictions", p. 67.

Statements about Stories

What is the truth value of sentences about fictions or fictional characters?

Any sentence must be said about some world. Usually we talk about our actual world. When we say something, our actual world is usually, but not always, the default. We do not usually say so but we assume that it is so (unless we have a reason for supposing otherwise). If I say "It is a sunny day" it is understood that I am referring to my actual world. You will concur if your world is close enough to mine (which in this simple case, it almost certainly will be) and in fact it is sunny. We will agree that this statement is right.

If I say "Elizabeth Bennet married Darcy" this is, surely, also right and it is right in the same way. Except, in this case, the claim that Elizabeth Bennet married Darcy, is not said about my actual world but about the Pride and Prejudice story-world. In that world, barring unusual interpretations of the text, it is right. If you are unfamiliar with the story, you might say "Who is Elizabeth Bennet?" When I explain, you may read the story to see for yourself, or you may take my assertion on trust.

Similarly, if I say, about a mutual acquaintance you have not seen for some time, "Elizabeth married Bill" you will probably take that on trust.

Suppose that I say "Isn't this a beautiful day that God made." Suppose, further, that you do not believe in God. You may respond with "It is a beautiful day but God didn't make it."[204] You have a different actual world from me and, so, my claim is only partly commensurable with your actual world. If your actual world

---

203 Robert J. Yanal, "The Paradox of Suspense", in *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 36, (1996), pp. 146-158.

were sufficiently different from mine, then my statement would not make any sense at all. But, suppose I say "Miss Jessel and Peter Quint terrified Miles to death" your response will depend upon your interpretation of the text. You might agree but, if you accept Cranfill's interpretation of the text, you might say "There were no ghosts and Miles was terrified to death by the governess."

Statements are normally made about some world; we often omit the qualifier, which would indicate which world. We take it, often rightly, that the person with whom we are conversing understands to which world we are referring. Anything we say must be interpreted; deciding to which world a statement refers is part of our interpretive activity. There is, thus, no difficulty with statements about fictions. Such statements refer to a world. If they are right, they are right in some (mutually agreed) story-world. Of course, we might say things for which we have no warrant. You might say, "I think Elizabeth Bennet must have been a redhead." That is a statement about you (and will, I take it be correct), but it is a statement about an object in this world. If you say, "Elizabeth Bennet was a redhead." the most we can infer is that your statement is reasonable, but so would be many other incompatible statements. The text is silent on the matter and there can be no authoritative appeal on the question. Where we disagree over an interpretation of the story-text, we might dispute such statements. Even in this case, you might adduce reasons for your claim (for example, you might cite characteristics which are widely supposed to accompany red hair).

Now, it is also possible to make comparisons across worlds. I might say "I married someone just like Elizabeth Bennet." Or, I could even say, "I married Elizabeth Bennet." I would be saying that my wife is like Elizabeth Bennet. I would probably be saying more than that. You, knowing my wife, might say that is so or not so. If we can compare things within worlds, we can make comparisons across worlds. Of course, in general terms, the characters in a story-world are not in a position to do that as they have no knowledge of our world.

---

[204] Or, being polite, you may just agree anyway.

Occasionally, we come across characters in a story-world who are familiar with other story-worlds. This happens, for example, in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*.

We can also say "Elizabeth Bennet is not like Emma" thus comparing characters across two story-worlds. We can do this because we can visit both those worlds. Neither Elizabeth Bennet nor Emma has that knowledge (although Jane Austen could have endowed, at least, one of them with that knowledge). We can compare things which are remotely located in this world. We can compare London with Sydney, Nixon with Churchill.

Currie suggests that what is true in the fiction is not what is true in the story-world, for he disputes the usefulness of such worlds. Currie says that what is true in the story is what the narrator of that story believes or, rather what we make-believe the narrator to believe or, in short, what we make believe to be so.[205] In this, he is taking Walton's make-believing approach to fiction. The difficulty with this approach is that, in our example of *The Turn of the Screw*, it is not clear what the governess believes. In the case of one interpretive scheme, she is telling the truth and, we take it, believes what she is saying. However, if she is deranged, as Cranfill argues, we cannot take it that she believes everything she says, but it is unlikely that she is aware of the extent of her misconceptions. She may well believe what she is saying, but be very wrong. If I make the story-world that way, then her beliefs cannot be definitive.

The attraction of the theory laid out here is that it is simple and straightforward. There is nothing special about stories or fictions, or the ways we talk about them. We may or may not trust the teller of the story or of the fiction or of something we are told about our actual world. There is, thus, a seamless quality about the ways we talk about different worlds.

---

205 Currie, *The Nature of Fiction*, p. 75-76.

Some works contain asides, and other comments, from the author. Jane Austen opens *Pride and Prejudice* by making the observation: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife."[206] There is also the well known opening to *Anna Karenina.* Such sentences, while part of the text, are not part of the story-text. By that, I mean to say that they do not contribute (directly) to the textual detail that we use to make the story-world. As such they do not form part of the story. We might, of course, be influenced by such asides to interpret the story-text this way rather than that. Whatever rightness such sentences might have is to be judged by normal means. They are, therefore, to be taken at "face value". Such sentiments may be attributed to the author, or they may not. We usually take Jane Austen's sentence to be a bit tongue-in-cheek and Tolstoy's to reflect his own opinions.

Aristotle recognised this kind of interjection from the author. He preferred that the author keep authorial opinion to a minimum and felt, too, that such asides do not form part of the plot.[207]

Of course, many such statements are generalisations and, as such, one might have difficulty imputing much meaning to them at all. But that would also be true were they to be taken out of the work and simply stated at, say, a party. These sorts of statements often do introduce the work and the reader might well bear them in mind in making the story-world.[208] There is no problem with that; such statements are part of the text and may be taken into account when making the story-world. But they are not part of the story. Some authors have the annoying habit of appealing to the reader during the course of the work and peppering their text with such asides. Charles Kingsley's *The Water-Babies*, for example, keeps making (racist) asides. These point out morals to the reader. As such, they do not

---

206 Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, p. 5.

207 Aristotle, *Poetics,* 1460a.

208 In a later chapter, I will talk of story-worlds as metaphors; such statements may be of relevance in the ways we take a text to be metaphoric.

form part of the story (although they do form part of the text of *The Water-Babies*). This is a question of style.

As with so many questions, whether a comment is an authorial aside or contributes to the story is not always obvious. Many writers place great emphasis on Austen's comment when they interpret the text. It is also true, that such comments are part of the author's work and were intended to be taken as part of the text. In this case, Austen did not relegate the comment to her private papers or even, to a preface. It forms part of the text of the novel. Nevertheless, we can still ask if the generalisation enshrined in the text is a good generalisation, as suggested above

Other Combinations

We have drawn a number of important conclusions. I want now to tie off a couple of loose ends. We need to understand what happens when stories are nested one inside another, and we need to know how to treat the appearance of apparently real world personages in a story. It could be held that these two situations present the theory outlined here with a difficulty, so we need to resolve these questions.

Many stories are presented as a story within a story. *The Turn of the Screw* is a typical example. The story about the governess and the ghosts is enclosed within another story. *The Turn of the Screw* starts with a prologue (not so named) which talks about a house party and the telling of frightening stories. One of the party, named Douglas, obtains papers from town and presents them on a subsequent evening. The main story is the contents of these papers. Now, it seems clear that we have a story within a story. There is the (slight) story of the houseparty which encloses the major ghost story. We recognise that the houseparty is a literary

device. That is part of the stylistic analysis of James' writing and is not to the particular point at this time.[209]

Because we are unable to alter the story-text, we cannot alter this arrangement (or any other part of it), without, thereby, making a new story (and a new story-world). The whole of the novel is enclosed in a story-world. But this is true of the characters in the prologue. They are to be read a story which has been written down, years ago, by one of the chief protagonists but who is now dead. So they are in the same position with respect to the main story, as we are with respect to their story. The conclusion I draw from this is to see a story-world within a story-world. There is a trivial story about a house party where people are telling ghost stories and the main story about the governess, Miles and so forth. This is a common novelists ploy. Mary Shelley, for example, uses it in *Frankenstein,* where the story is recounted as a set of letters. In referring to it as a novelist's ploy, I am moving from philosophy to literary criticism and analysis, a different exercise.

If we consider the play-within-a-play so beloved by Shakespeare, we find the same mechanism in use, for example, in *Hamlet* Act III, Scene ii. Here we have the well known double reenactment of the murder of Hamlet's father. Since the Dumb Show precedes the "play" we have two plays within the major play, *Hamlet.* The first of these is the Dumb Show and that is followed by the "play". Were, as is commonly supposed, the Dumb Show to occur within the "play", then we would have a story-world within a story-world within a story-world. I know of no examples, but, in principle, such a thing (to however many levels the patience of the audience would last) presents no theoretical difficulty.

The play in *Hamlet* does affect its audience, which is the court of the king of Denmark firstly, and only secondarily the audience watching Shakespeare's play

---

209 Although we have already noted how the prologue can be used to strengthen or weaken interpretations of the main story.

Hamlet. In fact the latter audience is not primarily interested in the Dumb Show or the "play" but in the reactions of Gertrude and the other main protagonists in the Hamlet story-world. Toward the end of the performance of the "play" the king rises and asks for a light to leave "Give me some light"[210] he says. Polonius asks for lights and everyone leaves but Hamlet and Horatio. We are later told that the king has "choler"[211] and the queen is "in most great affliction of spirit."[212] Most people interpret these events in *Hamlet* as indicating that the "play" is close to the bone and has, indeed, affected the viewers of Hamlet's "play". They all leave and the "play" is abandoned or cut short.

We can see clearly the operation of the mechanics spelled out in this essay.

In the case of *Hamlet*, we can see that the "play" is a significant part of the action of the whole work. It has a significant impact upon the dramatis personae. The performance of the Pyramus and Thisbe episode in A *Midsummer Night's Dream*, on the other hand, is an entertainment presented for the duke's wedding. As such it is less significant to the action of the play. What is significant to the Midsummer Night's Dream story-world is the preparation, in the woods around Athens, for the performance of the Pyramus and Thisbe play at the Duke's wedding. But those preparations take place in the Midsummer Night's Dream story-world and they are part of the (main) action of *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

This is all very fine and accounts for most such cases. There are, however, stories where the characters in each of the separate worlds interact. Le Poidevin[213] cites several examples. Some of his examples are very like the example of *A*

---

210 Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act III, scene ii, line 275.

211 Ibid., line 310.

212 Ibid., line 319.

213 Robin Le Poidevin, "Worlds within Worlds? The Paradoxes of Embedded Fiction", in *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 35, (1995), pp. 227-238.

Midsummer Night's Dream, cited above, where we see and deal with the preparations for a play or a case where people are involved with the making of a film. In such cases there is no interaction between fictional worlds, for all the action takes place within one world or in a manner such that the worlds remain separate. Le Poidevin, however, raises the interesting case of Flann O'Brien's novel *At Swim-Two-Birds*. In this novel, the main character writes a story about a beautiful woman who is to be ravished by the villain, but is, instead, ravished and made pregnant by the author of the outer story. Perhaps a more familiar example is Leoncavallo's opera, *I Pagliacci*. In this opera a troupe of clowns (the clowns of the title) present a play for the villagers. In the play-within-the-opera, one character murders another. Due to jealousy between characters in the opera, the murder in the-play-within-the-opera actually takes place in the outer opera or, rather, in both the play and the opera.

Le Poidevin calls such stories "pathological". We cannot maintain a strict barrier between the worlds in the story in cases such as these. That barrier has become permeable, in the case of *At Swim-Two-Birds* to the extent that a character in the outer world makes a character in the inner world pregnant. We can live with the permeability in this situation. Indeed we must. But, we can still note that the At Swim-Two-Birds story-world is still impermeably separate form the actual world of the reader. Le Poidevin suggests that the interest in such cases arises from their paradoxicality and the way the author manipulates our (logical) expectations. He suggests that pathological stories are like such [pathological] sentences as

> This sentence is false.[214]

The second problem is that of the appearance of actual world personages and other entities in a story-world.

---

214 Ibid., p. 235.

I have already mentioned place. Places are as described in the story. If the story says there is a tree in a certain place, then there is a tree in that place. If a story says there is a house in a certain location, then there is. Sometimes a place in a story is, or seems to be, a place in this world. A story may be set in a particular time and place (which we take to be a time and a place in this world). That provides no warrant for taking this world to be as described by the story. If the story describes events and locations that are not so in this world, too bad for this world. For example, it is well known that Sherlock Holmes lived in a house at 221B Baker Street, London. In the "real" London, there has never been a house at that location. There is such a location but it is, so far as I am aware, occupied by a bank. However, in the Sherlock Holmes story-world, there is a house at that location and Sherlock Holmes lives there.

We have, thus, no warrant for taking the "real" world to be as described in the Sherlock Holmes stories. Similarly, we must be careful in attributing to the London in the story-world, the attributes of the London in this world. Sometimes the writer, of course, assumes and wants us to impute to the London of the story-world well-known geographical features of the "real" London. To the extent that the story does not override such matters it is, surely, legitimate to do that. But we must always be careful not to allow our understanding of how things are in the "real" world to override how the text tells us they are in the story-world. To use the name of a place in the "real" world, can be a sort of shorthand to describe the story-world place.

It would, of course, be an odd thing for a writer to use the name of a well-known location in the "real" world and give it attributes very unlike the "real" world location. That may be done as a parody, but we would not expect a city to be called London only to find that it had none of the topographical, climatic and other features of the London with which we are reasonably familiar. One would not normally make the story-world London to be a bright, sunny place surrounded by coral reefs. It would be absurd for an author to invite readers to do that.

We may extend what we have said and suggest that the author may have set the story in the location she did, so that we would, in fact, attribute to the story-world place, the attributes of the actual world place. This is, as I have suggested, a legitimate practice as far as it goes. But we still have no warrant, apart from normal practise and commonsense, for doing so. Of course, we are also inclined to do the reverse (with unfamiliar places); so, we often take the "real" world to be like the story-world. An author describes London in the story. We take it that (also) the "real" London is like that. However, as I have said, we have no warrant for doing so. If the "real" London turns out to be different, we cannot blame the author or accuse her of misrepresentation (although we might agree that to do that would be silly). As we have observed, there is no house at 221B Baker Street, and never has been. Nevertheless, it is common and appropriate to understand the story-world location and the "real" world location to be similar. A place called "London" appears in many different stories. There is also a place with that name in the "real" world. The story-world Londons share certain characteristics. It is usually a dirty, foggy, drizzly, cold and depressing city.[215] It is understandable that I will take it that the place with the same name in the "real" world is also like that. I might complain if a travel guide gives me a false impression, I can hardly complain if Dickens does so.

We find a similar situation when historical characters are introduced into a story.

For example, "Napoleon" appears in *War and Peace*. Such appearances should be treated in the same way as places in the discussion above. The Napoleon in the War and Peace story-world is not the Napoleon who ran around the Europe of the "real" world in the early 1800s. He is a character in the War and Peace story-world and that is a very different world. We are intended, by Tolstoy, to understand that his Napoleon is, in certain ways, like the other Napoleon but that is all we can do. If the story-world Napoleon is not like the "real" world Napoleon, we cannot argue with Tolstoy. Certainly some of the things that the

---

215 At least if you read Dickens.

War and Peace story-world Napoleon did may differ from those that the real world Napoleon did. Charles Crittenden argues that we must take it that the story-world character is that way "'in the story.'"[216] He suggests, as I have above, that, at best, certain departures from the facts of this world might "offend ... the reader's sense of verisimilitude".[217]

Some think of worlds as overlapping in these circumstances. The story-world overlaps the "real" world to the extent that the activities, character and so forth of the story-world character or place and the 'real" world character or place coincide. The difficulty here is that the story-world ceases to be a separate realm. There is a door between the "real" world and the story-world through which characters move. That would mean that sometimes Napoleon was himself but other times, he would be a story-world character. As characters moved through that door, they would cease to be themselves and then re-become themselves. Nothing could then be pinned down. Such a situation would create more problems than it solves. Further, that would not help us to know what was true of an actual world. To know that, we would have to know, independently, what is "true" of the world and, we could then conclude, everything else is fictional. That solves no problem and sets the reader great difficulties. Such questions are not to do with making sense of stories but to do with understanding history. It is better to seal the worlds off and only import into the actual world what one already knows.

Sometimes an author introduces a character who is supposed to be like a "real" world personage but is very unlike that person. For example, Offenbach's operetta, *Orpheus in the Underworld*, provides a set of gods and a Eurydice who are very different from those commonly understood. We are intended to compare these gods and characters with (I can hardly say) the "real" ones to appreciate the parody he presents.

---

216 Charles Crittenden, *Unreality: the Metaphysics of Fictional Objects*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991, p. 134.

217 Ibid.

We have accounted for the appearance of "historical personages" in a story. But histories are, as we have said, also stories. An account of Caesar's exploits in Gaul is a story. Its author has taken a stand on this as history and claims to be recounting history. On that basis, the history story-world just is this world. In other words, an uncritical acceptance of a history leads us to (rightly) assimilate that history story to this world. If I tell a story about a mutual acquaintance, the same basic rule applies. Now, what if the story is not right. Then I must decide how much of the story-world to assimilate to my actual world. Even here, I start with an assumption different from that with which I start when reading a fiction. If I read a fiction, I take it that the story-world is separate. It seems best to keep it that way. If I read a history (from a reputable source), I make the opposite assumption. Of course, most readers simply accept what the history story says.

If the history is in error or, which is the same thing, we believe part only of that history, then we have a problem. We need some sort of independent warrant to take an historical account as correct, unless we are prepared to defer to the author of that work. To the extent that we do take such material to accurately tell us about our actual world, we must decide how to assimilate it into our actual world. In other words, an informed person, who is treating history with that kind of care, does not take the history-story-world uncritically as part of an actual world, where the ordinary reader might. To do that is, of course, to do history.

There are some stories that are neither one nor the other. Historical novels are an example. A recent case is Peter Carey's Booker Prize winning novel *The True History of the Kelly Gang*. How much of Carey's story is "true" and how much "false". Certainly the internal clues are designed to make it seem like a "straight" history. It is even printed on paper with rough-cut edges and a slightly yellowed look to, presumably, give it an air of authenticity. Yet, we know it is a novel. The novel is clearly biased in favour of Kelly. Each reader will have to decide what to accept and what not. Personally, I take it as basically factual but "fleshed out" as is an historical novel. But that is my assimilation of the True History of the Kelly

Gang story-world to my actual world (of Victoria in the 1870s). If I wanted to be more careful, then I would need to know, independently, the "facts" of the matter.

Modal Realism, Combinatorialism and Goodmanian Worlds

Finally, I wish to briefly turn to modal realism in order to clearly identify several key differences between the approach of David Lewis and the approach being put forward here. I hope, by discussing what I am not saying, to clarify what I am saying. What I am calling actual worlds are a Goodmanian construct. Although they derive from and owe much to Nelson Goodman, it is clear that he would, at least in part, disavow the kind of world I have called by his name.[218]

David Lewis also advocates a system which recognises the existence of many worlds. This system, he calls modal realism. According to modal realism, every possible world exists but does so disconnected from every other world. This world is the actual world to us, its inhabitants. The other worlds are the actual worlds to their inhabitants. However, all possible worlds are real (that is to say, instantiated). Lewis argues that modal realism solves problems of modal logic and counterfactuals. It also solves questions about fictions. For Lewis, fictions actually occur, but in some other world where, he says, they are told as "known fact rather than fiction."[219] For Elizabeth Bennet, the world which is (partially) described by *Pride and Prejudice*, is her actual world. In fact, of course, all those

---

218 In fact, not only does Goodman demand that any world be consistent, he also denies that there are such things as story-worlds. For example, he says in *Of Mind and Other Matters* that "there are no fictive worlds", p. 125.

219 David Lewis, "Truth in Fiction", in *Philosophical Papers* vol. 1, 1983, p. 266.

possible worlds that are consistent with the novel (that is to say, the text) would be potential worlds of (and I take it, ways of interpreting) that story. Since each world must be complete, for it is actual, and the story is not complete, there must be, for Lewis, many worlds which are consistent with *Pride and Prejudice*. Each such world would be consistent with the story-text in different ways because the text is a subset of "facts" about such worlds.

In the form in which Lewis propounds it, modal realism says that every possible world is instantiated. I do not claim that story-worlds are instantiated. It is not necessary for them to be instantiated for the results we have discussed above to follow. Modal realism is, thus, an ontologically very generous system.

Some philosophers rebel at this generosity and prefer to define a possible world in a manner other than as existing. One such system is known as combinatorialism. In this system, possible worlds are maximal sets of consistent propositions. To generate all the possible worlds, all we need do is to combine all the possible propositions in all the consistent ways (it may take a while). Since each world is a maximal set, each world is complete (no new proposition could be added to the set without introducing a contradiction) and each world is internally consistent. If we took all the possible propositions in pairs, where each pair consists of a proposition and its negation, then we can construct each world by selecting one proposition from each pair, choosing in such a manner as to maintain consistency. Thus every possible proposition is true or false in every possible combinatory world. Note immediately, that combinatorialism returns to the concepts of true and false, rather than continuing to use the concepts of right and wrong.[220] Modal realism is, thus, committed to classical logical concepts such as excluded middle. We have noted that there are potentially many Pride and Prejudice story-worlds in Lewis' system. This is because the novel is not a maximal set of propositions but

---

220 I leave aside questions of propositions which may conflict (light is a wave, light is particulate; God is three, God is one), since I do not accept combinatorialism anyway.

a collection of sentences selected and arranged by Jane Austen; she omitted quite a few propositions.

But these combinatorial worlds are not Goodmanian worlds as I am using the term. There are a number of crucial differences. Goodmanian worlds are not simply mathematically generated sets of propositions. Stories are not created by random generation of possibilities. A writer writes by selecting from possibilities (but not from all possibilities). A story is a deliberately created thing and not a random selection.

Combinatorial worlds are constructed from propositions but stories are made from sentences (I have encountered many sentences, but never a proposition). Propositions do not occur in sequences but are unordered collections. Stories are ordered sequences of sentences where the storyteller (deliberately) puts the sentences into the order in which they appear. So the same combinatorial world could, conceivably, be created by many different story tellings (I will not discuss the question of whether the same story told differently is a different story — but it may well be a different literary work).

Propositions have an abstract purity which is not shared by things as messy and uncontrollable as sentences. The author uses words and sentences to manipulate our emotions and reactions. Sentences and words carry suggestions that the author uses to draw on our (human) experience and contribute to the overall meaning of a work. Words have aesthetic qualities. The author combines words to present a world from a prejudiced viewpoint. We come to see the fictional world, as we do our actual world, from a perspective already prejudiced. We do not "see" the world of the story from a neutral, "propositional" base.[221] For example, Mr. Collins is not just accurately reported but he is described and reported in such a manner as to convey Austen's dislike for his sycophantic

---

221 Neither do we see the actual world from a neutral propositional perspective.

nature; it would be an unusual reader who did not take a dislike to him. Stories, then, are not just combinations of propositions for they play upon our emotions and, partly, direct our responses to their content.

There are two systems here: modal realism says that all possible worlds are instantiated (and are the actual world for their inhabitants); combinatorialism asserts that all possible combinatorial worlds exist (but are not necessarily instantiated). There is no access to these worlds. Further, every statement is either true or false of such worlds and those worlds are consistent, for Lewis, like Goodman, supposes that a world must be consistent to be possible. But stories are not maximal sets of propositions. Stories are not (necessarily) consistent. So far as we can ever know, story-worlds do not exist independently of their makers (both the author and the reader); they are made when the story is created and remade by the reader.

Combinatorial worlds and the worlds of modal realism are sealed off hermetically from us. We can have no access to them; we can know nothing about them. We cannot "read" stories in them for we cannot access them. They are a philosopher's postulate. As such they are far removed from the sorts of worlds we have been considering.

It is part of the definition of a combinatorial world that the proposition set be maximal and consistent. It is possible that this world is described by such a set of propositions. On certain metaphysical suppositions about the nature of time and the determinacy of the world, all possible propositions about this world have a predetermined truth-value.[222]

We do not place a constraint of maximality or consistency on either the symbolisation of an actual world or a story-world. No story-world or actual world could ever be maximal. There are many things left unstated in a story. A good

---

222 I owe this observation to Brian Garrett.

writer includes what is essential to the purpose. There is no requirement that a story present a complete world. Different readers might fill in different parts of the world, and in different ways, when they read the work. That is a legitimate activity. It is legitimate for me to construct Elizabeth Bennet with red hair and someone else to give her brown hair and another person to make her blonde. That detail is one of the many things we are not told. We get a glimpse into the world of the story but we are never shown the whole world and we could never fill in all the gaps in a story and, fortunately, we have no need to. This is, of course, also true of the actual world. No one person could ever know everything about the actual world. Neither is it possible that everything could be known. A Goodmanian world is not maximal.

Neither need a story be consistent. Possible worlds must be just that: possible. Proponents of classical logic take that requirement to mean that the set of propositions which describe that world, must be consistent (just as such people assume that any symbolisation of this world must be consistent), for inconsistent worlds are, they believe, not possible. But stories need not be possible in this sense. Although we do not know what is impossible, it seems most unlikely that men can turn into giant beetles. In this world, I think, animals do not talk. It may be that in some world this is possible, but who is to say? If, in some world, men do turn into giant beetles, who can say in what ways that world would be different from this? It is most unlikely that it would be almost identical in other respects (as the story implies it is). Under some interpretative schemata, this is the point of the story. Lewis seems to suggest that such worlds are logically possible and that every logically possible world is instantiated. But how can we know what is logically possible? How can we know that a world where men turn into beetles is, in fact, possible. It may be that such a world is inherently contradictory.

When we read a story, we accept the conventions of that story. We accept, in *Wind in the Willows*, that animals do talk (and, some of them, intelligently). We accept, in *Metamorphosis*, that men can (and do) turn into beetles. We accept, in

fictional worlds, that there are fairies in the woods outside Athens, and we accept that people travel through time, and travel through space at speeds greater than the speed of light. I think (but cannot prove) that none of these things can happen and suspect that none of them is possible. If this is so, H. G. Well's *The Time Machine*, does not present a possible combinatorial world, although it does present a good fictional world.[223]

But possibility is not a requirement of a Goodmanian world (as we have now defined it). We accept the conventions of the world being described at face value, for we have more important things to do than to worry about the consistency of such a world. This is not to say that a story can be a tarradiddle. It must be reasonable within the limits set by its fictional genre. If the story were completely unpredictable so that we could not accept it as "reasonable", at least in its own terms, it would, surely, cease to interest us.

Even our construction of the actual world is probably not consistent. We believe many things, as I have already suggested, that are contradictory. The same kinds of problems arise for modal realism. Lewis recognises that stories may contain inconsistencies and he attempts to solve this problem by carving the stories up. Lewis recognises that some stories are inconsistent. Yet, for Lewis, all worlds must be possible and, therefore so far as he is concerned, consistent. Where a

---

223 I must admit to being very sceptical that certain worlds, widely presumed to be possible, are, in fact, possible. How would the laws of gravity need to change in order for it to be possible for a beetle the size of a man to exist; if that were so, then how could other things in that world seem normal? I am inclined to think that the Metamorphosis story-world is not a possible world. In other words, I am inclined to think that, hidden away in the story-world, are serious logical inconsistencies.

Lewis is, of course, concerned with logical possibility. By that, he means without logical contradiction, but if a thing is only contingently impossible, then it can not be an actual world and, I think, Lewis' system, depending as it does on actuality, must fail for such worlds as well as for logically impossible, by which I understand him to mean contradictory, worlds.

story is inconsistent, he suggests that we can simply amend the story in some manner. If the story is inconsistent in small ways we could revise it "minimally".[224] Failing that, we could divide the story into two (or more) parts where each part is consistent within itself.[225] If a fiction is impossible (by which he means, seriously inconsistent), then Lewis seems to think the case is hopeless. There could be no (possible) world where an impossible fiction is told as known fact and the truth (for Lewis is concerned with truth in fiction) of anything in it is "vacuous".[226] The techniques that Lewis is proposing to solve his problem with story-worlds match the techniques that Goodman used to try and solve his problems with actual worlds, but both attempts present similar difficulties. We do not want to violate the integrity of a story in this manner. And, if we work with the current thesis, we do not need to. If there are lessons to be learnt from fictional worlds, those lessons are not an accidental result of combinations such as these. Combinatorial worlds are dry and uninteresting when compared with the fecundity of Goodmanian worlds. So modal realism and combinatorialism fail to account for stories or the ways in which we make actual worlds.

A further benefit claimed for modal realism is that it makes sense of counterfactuals. To stray into a detailed consideration of counterfactuals here would be a large, and unnecessary, digression. I do, however, want to, very briefly, indicate how the system described in this thesis can meet that requirement at least as well as modal realism (and its variants). A counterfactual, I argue, describes a world where the counterfactual situation is so. We will spend only a few sentences examining this matter

"If the bough breaks, the baby will fall", is a prediction and not a counterfactual. Either that prediction comes true (the bough breaks and the baby falls) or it fails

---

224 Lewis, "Truth in Fiction", p. 275.

225 David Lewis, "Postscripts to 'Truth in Fiction'", in *Philosophical Papers* vol. 1, 1983, p. 267.

226 Lewis, "Truth in Fiction", p. 274.

(the bough does not break or it does, but the baby does not fall). We may, as a result of the prediction, take the cradle (and baby) out of the tree, to prevent such an occurrence. Then the prediction, presumably, fails (the bough does not break, or, no longer being in the tree, the baby does not fall). We can never know what would have happened had we not taken the baby down. We may say, when the baby has been safely rescued, if the bough had broken, the baby would have fallen and we would all now be at the hospital casualty department. This latter is a counterfactual and amounts to a story about how things might have been different.

So a counterfactual is, simply, a little story about how things might have been. It is a story, in this example, of a baby left in a tree (of certain characteristics). In the story, the bough breaks, the baby falls and is injured, and we all go to the hospital casualty department to obtain medical treatment. Many counterfactuals posit worlds that are taken to be almost identical to this world. The example just given is like that. But some counterfactual story-worlds may, in fact not even be possible. For example, if I had been Rockefeller's son, I would have been rich, is a logical impossibility (I think) for, had I been Rockefeller's son, I would not have been me and, so, the counterfactual would be nonsense if set in a possible world. Yet, seen as a story-world, such a counterfactual makes sense and this result conforms to commonsense. After all, we are able to give such a counterfactual sense or meaning. Many such counterfactuals are assumed to be reflected in some sort of possible world, but we can never know. If I say, had Nixon lost the election, the Nixon-lost-the-election counterfactual world would be different from this (actual) world in, who knows, how many different ways. For example, the electoral system may have been very different and those differences would have had to arise from a different history etc. A number of voters would have to be either dead or otherwise not have voted or additional voters would be required or voters would have to have different personalities to vote differently and so forth. These sorts of incommensurables disappear under the story-world scenario.

An account of counterfactuals such as that given here, has a lot in common with Dudman's semantic account.[227] Dudman analyses conditionals under grammatical categories to describe them as "judgments" or "verdicts" based upon a possible set of circumstances. He says that the "speaker conducts a 'fantasy' which sets out the facts of [the counterfactual claim] and develops continuously"[228] to make what I would call a counterfactual story.

We have now completed that major part of our investigation into why stories make sense. I want to move from this point to a consideration of imagination as the means by which we make worlds. I still need to consider the question of how stories tell us anything. Why should a visit to an interesting story-world be instructive? That question will have to await a further chapter.

The Ontology of Worlds

However, it is fitting, before moving on, to raise once again briefly the question of the ontology of worlds, both story and actual. This thesis is about stories and story-worlds, rather than ontology. What we need to recognise here is to what extent the thesis commits us to any given ontological position. This thesis does not argue for any ontology in particular. There are, potentially, two ontological questions surrounding our discussion. The first relates to the ontological status of art works and to the question: What is an art work? The second, of more importance here, is the question of the status of story-worlds.

---

227 V. H. Dudman, "Grammar, Semantics and Conditionals", in *Analysis*, 50, (1990), pp. 214-224..

228 Ibid., p. 220.

In this thesis, we have not asked the question what is an art work or what sort of thing is an art work? And we will not do so now. It is, however, necessary to note that there have been many answers proposed to that question; most writers would, include, at least some, stories in the category "art work". Richard Wollheim[229] argues that some works of art, such as paintings and sculptures, are single objects (for example, *The Hay Wain*, is a particular canvass hanging in The National Gallery, London) and some, such as novels are not (there are many copies of *Pride and Prejudice*); Nelson Goodman agrees.[230] Roman Ingarden, we will note towards the end of this thesis, locates the work with an intentional object of its author and not with any particular canvass which is the expression of that object.[231] Croce and Collingwood both thought this way too. Gregory Currie[232] disputes the necessity of Wollheim's distinction, of singular and plural works, often called, following Goodman, allographic and autographic.[233] Currie argues that a work of art should be seen as an action of the artist. Writing a novel or a symphony or painting a picture, then become particular kinds of acts. The work results (or may result) from that act.

Our thesis is amenable, or neutral, to many such ideas. It is not necessary to agree with any or none of them in this thesis. There is one point that must, however, be clarified. This thesis has argued that, at least with a story, the reader makes a story-world from the story-text which represents the story-world. Whatever a work is, it must be such as to allow this. The authors cited above do allow that possibility and this thesis, is neutral to the various ideas proposed by them.

---

229 Richard Wollheim, *Art and Its Objects 2nd ed. With Six Supplementary Essays,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

230 Goodman, *Languages of Art.*

231 Roman Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art: An Investigation on the Borderlines of Ontology, Logic, and Theory of Literature, with an Appendix on the Functions of Language in the Theater* (transl. George G. Grabowicz), Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973.

232 Currie, *An Ontology of Art.*

Ingarden, although favouring the idea that the art work is an intentional object, specifically argues, as we do, that the text is open to the interpretation of the reader.

What, then, is the ontological status of the story-world. It was to clarify this question that the topic of ontology has been raised. Nelson Goodman was, as is well known, a nominalist. This thesis is certainly consistent with a nominalist stance. It would be possible to argue that the overall state-of-affairs, is all that there is and that everything else is made by minds which are, themselves, part of that state-of-affairs.[234] Such an approach can be ontologically very sparse. It is not necessary, however, to go to that ontological extreme; a much richer ontology is consistent with the worldmaking approach outlined earlier.

If any existent must be consistent, then story-worlds (and actual worlds as defined by any person) may not qualify, for, as we have already observed, story-worlds (and, almost certainly, actual worlds) may not be, and often are not, consistent. Therefore, we must reject an ontology which places a requirement of actuality, in a Lewisian sense, on story-worlds. We have already done this. This means that story-worlds must be seen to be objects in the mind of the reader (and/or the author) and, thus, to be intentional objects.[235] It is a question of psychology as to how complete any given-story world must be at any given time. It is not essential to say that the whole of the story-world is in the mind (whatever that may mean) at one time. We have already observed that such objects have, as does any large idea, a wavering kind of existence. We have also referred to Iser's observation that story-worlds are built up over time; we build, we forget, we rebuild, we encounter something in the text that reminds us of something we had (half)

---

233 Goodman, *Languages of Art*, p. 113.

234 That is my own preferred ontology.

235 We have already argued that these intentional objects are unique to minds and, so, the story-world, or actual world, in my mind will be, at least

forgotten, and so forth. This thesis has argued that the story-world made by readers from the text will differ and, perhaps differ radically from each other and also from that in the mind of the author. If the work is an intentional object in someone's mind, the mind of the author as argued by Wollheim, then the work is private because the reader will not recover it (exactly) from the text. I do not have a problem with that.

It also follows, similarly, that actual worlds are intentional objects, a point that was made earlier.

---

slightly, different from that in your mind and different again from that in the author's mind.

CHAPTER 5

Worlds of Imagination

In this chapter, I will argue that making worlds is an imaginative, synthesising activity. To make worlds (either story-worlds or actual worlds) is to use our imagination to synthesise that world from the text or from our experience. My purpose, in discussing imagination is to establish that imagination is a much more pervasive thing than is often supposed and that we use mental techniques that (should) pass under this term all the time. My ultimate purpose is to demonstrate that the sorts of mental activities that lead to the making of story-worlds are also the sorts of mental activities on which we rely to make actual worlds. In both cases we synthesise the world in question.

Most people will readily accept that we use our imagination to make a story-world. They will certainly accept that the author of a work uses her imagination to create the text originally. What may not seem so clear is that imagination is also required to make an actual world and also, I will argue, with Kant, to recognise things. The level of similarity between the two activities is such that I am prepared to argue that we use a common sort of mental activity to carry it out; I am calling that sort of mental activity "imagination". This is, of course, in line with the overarching thesis I am arguing: namely, that story-worlds and actual worlds are very similar sorts of things. The discussion in this chapter will, thus, build on our previous consideration of the similarities between story-worlds and

actual worlds; the making of both requires the use of our imagination. With this discussion, I will consider the major demonstration of this thesis complete.

In his *Defence of Poetry*, Percy Shelley contrasts reason with imagination. Reason, he says, is what we use to break things down and to discover relations between things. Imagination, on the other hand, is what we use to synthesise things. "Reason respects the differences, and imagination the similitudes of things."[236] For Shelley, of course, imagination is, primarily, the poetical faculty. But, also for Shelley, poetry is so wide a category as to encompass much that we would not usually classify as poetry. Poetry is, says Shelley, "the expression of the imagination"[237] and includes such imaginative creations as the writings of Plato.[238]

Shelley says that "there is a principle within us ... which harmonises"[239] our experience; this harmonisation is what leads to the development of religion and art. When we harmonise our experience we, effectively, synthesise a world. To do that we use our imagination and it is this rôle, as the definer of what we are, that makes poetry, which is its flowering, and poets the "unacknowledged legislators of the world."[240]

Shelley was not writing as a philosopher but, to cast Shelley's *Defence* into the terms we are using, we may say that, for Shelley, we use our imagination to make worlds. To "legislate" is to decree what is; that is to say, to make a world. We synthesise a world (or part of a world) when we make our actual world and its contents. We harmonise that world when we try to make the whole thing "hang

---

236 Percy Bysshe Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1921, p. 23.

237 Ibid.

238 Ibid., p. 29.

239 Ibid., p. 24.

240 Ibid., p. 59.

together". We synthesise a world when we read a literary work (or look at a painting or listen to a symphony). We harmonise that world when we try to make the whole story-world "hang together". This synthesising and harmonising is a function of the imagination. It is imagination that creates an actual world or a world of a work of art. I will argue that some philosophers (and, perhaps, common usage) limit the functioning of imagination by, for example, treating it as something that creates (only) fictions and "day dreams". It will follow from the way we will treat imagination, that imagination is pervasive and that we must use our imagination to get through even the smallest daily task. Without imagination, we would have no world and no framework within which our experience could be gathered and understood. Without imagination we would be powerless to act purposively.

It is an act of imagination to make the Pride and Prejudice story-world. It is an act of imagination to see the picture, Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur L'Herbe*, as a picture representing two men and a naked woman picnicking on the grass or to see Manet's *Olympia* as a naked woman lying on a couch. It is a further act of imagination to see the *Olympia* as being like Titian's *The Venus of Urbino*. We must use imagination to see a picture in a cloud. We must also use imagination to "see" the duck in the duck-rabbit and we must use imagination to see the rabbit in the duck-rabbit.[241] But, it is also an act of imagination to see a bird in a tree, or this dog as the same as the dog we saw yesterday (or as different). For all these things require an act of synthesis.

To engage in any purposive activity of even the most trivial kind is an affair of the imagination. To purpose something, we must imagine the result we are trying to achieve. To make a decision we must consider alternatives before we can choose and act. The creation of counterfactual alternatives (worlds), as we discussed them at the end of the previous chapter is, clearly, an imaginative activity. To

---

241 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (transl. G. E. M. Anscombe), Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1997, p. 194.

decide if a statement (for example, "it is raining") is true, we must make the world implied by the statement (although we do not need to make an elaborate and detailed world) and compare that world with our actual world (by glancing out of the window, we check the state of our world). This also is an imaginative activity. To learn to use language (that is to learn to symbolise) and to learn to interpret language (or paintings) is to learn to use imagination.

The significant component in all imaginative acts is the act of synthesising. Considered as a synthesising activity, imagination is pervasive in all the activities of life. Its use cannot be restricted to just making story-worlds or to operating in worlds other than actual worlds. In a recent article Leslie Stevenson called imagination an "extremely flexible notion".[242] He identified, without necessarily endorsing as legitimate, twelve different concepts for which we use the term "imagination". These concepts range from "[t]he ability to think of something that is not presently perceived, but is ... real"[243] through "[t]he ability to think of whatever one acknowledges as possible"[244] and "[t]he ability to form beliefs ... about public objects"[245] to "the ability to create works of art".[246] One could argue that each of each of Stevenson's twelve concepts is a different use of the term and merits a word of its own. Perhaps, but I am suggesting that the twelve all have something in common: synthesising. I want to argue that, basically, imagination is a synthesising activity and that we use it for making worlds. If someone uses a more restrictive definition (as, we will see, does Sartre), that does not invalidate the argument put here. What we call it, of course, is not important, what is important is the common use of synthesising across these activities.

---

242 Leslie Stevenson, "Twelve Conceptions of Imagination", in *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 43, (2003), p. 238.

243 Ibid., p. 239.

244 Ibid., p. 241.

245 Ibid., p. 249.

246 Ibid., p. 258.

Imagination as Imaging

The word "imagination" itself derives from the word used for "image" and, for many people, the term "imagination" describes the ability to conjure up, or make, mental images. I am not saying what a "mental image" is; I am unable to do that. Despite this difficulty, "mental image" is a well understood term. "Imagine you are at the seaside," we say. We conjure up an image of a beach with sand, the ocean and other concepts related to the beach. We might imagine sea shells and sea gulls. We might picture a windy day or brilliant sunshine. We might imagine ourselves surfing. We might smell the salty sea smell. In fact, as we start to imagine, if we allow our reverie sufficient time and space to develop, we can synthesise quite a considerable "scene". Often this scene is a recreation of something we have seen or is a creation constructed from bits of experience synthesised into the "scene" we are imagining. We add some sea birds to the overall "picture". They will be birds we have seen or they may be some sort of idealised birds; they may be clearly imaged or only vaguely imaged, but they may be added to the "picture" in any fashion that suits our fancy. We may picture them on the rocks picking at sea snails or wheeling in the sky. If we were a painter, we might decide to paint the scene. This is certainly an important and common use of the term "imagination". But, as we have already noted, it is not the only way the term can be used.

If imagination is restricted to picturing then we would have to say that paintings may be imaginative, but poems are not. This is, most of us would agree, an unacceptable conclusion (although there are, of course, poems that we would happily describe as unimaginative). We can imagine more than pictures.

"Imagine the smell of roast lamb for lunch on Sunday when we were kids," we say. We can easily do that!

Much of our mental activity is language based. As the picture fades, we are still able to describe (in words) or speak about how it was, but have only a very indistinct image. Mental images are often vague (although thought can often sharpen them). White argues that imagination does more than imaging, since much of what we imagine is "non-sensory".[247] Singer reports experimental, psychological[248] evidence as supporting this conclusion. The sea "scene" described above may be partly pictorial but it may consist of other sensual components: the smell of the sea, the tingle of the cold water, the exhilaration of riding the waves. It may consist of a purely verbal description encompassing the sorts of things we associate with such a location.

I do not want to suggest that imagination may not utilise our imaging capability. Of course, it often does. However, for many writers, this aspect of imagination exhausts the topic, thus limiting themselves to only one aspect of Stevenson's list. Sartre talks as if imagination is solely a picture constructing mechanism. But, he goes even further and adds the requirement that the thing imagined be not-there (either because it does not exist and, so, could not be present, or because it happens to be somewhere else). For Sartre, imagination conjures up an image of an object which is not present. It is, for Sartre, the lack of the presence of the imagined scene or object that makes that scene or object imagined. If we actually look at Peter and recognise him as Peter, this is not, for Sartre, imagination. Even if we look at a tree when it is dusk and think: "Ah! Here is Peter" but are mistaken, this is not imagination at work. Sartre calls this a false judgment for, he

---

247 Alan R White, *The Language of Imagination,* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990, p. 89.

248 Jerome L Singer, *Daydreaming and Fantasy,* London: George Allen and Unwin, 1976, p. 10.

tells us (rightly, I think) that, "perceiving is judging."[249] But before we can make Sartre's judgment, we must make the object about which we are to judge. We see the tree in the gloom; we make a "picture" of Peter, we see the shadows and the tree limbs in a certain manner; we then say "Ah! Here is Peter." But, since we made the "picture" wrongly, it is not Peter, after all. But we have still made the picture, that is to say, we have still had to imagine Peter to recognise him, either truly or wrongly.

Sartre's opinion seems, at first blush, to coincide with common usage. We do (often) imagine things as pictures and we often imagine things which are absent (daydreaming is a species of imagination). And we often use the term "imagination" with this implication. We say "you are only imagining it" to mean that something is not there or is not as we judged it to be. But we also commonly attribute what Sartre calls false judgment to imagination, for we say "you only imagined it was Peter," when we mistake a tree for him. I agree that to make a "picture" of someone who is not there (either because he or it is absent from sight or because the thing does not exist) is an exercise (at least, in part) of the imagination (that is one of Stevenson's twelve concepts).

But, as we have seen, we often use the term without limiting it in the way that Sartre does. Our "common" use of the term is more complex than Sartre's simple formula will allow; his view is altogether too restricted. Imagination is required to recognise both what is absent and what is present. Imagination operates not only with images but also with language and other senses. The claim I am making is that we use imagination to carry out that activity, we have labelled worldmaking. Further, I will argue that we use imagination to make both story-worlds and actual worlds as described earlier in this thesis. Imagination is, thus, pervasive. To define imagination the way Sartre does is to gloss the similarities in favour of one

---

249 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Imagination: A Psychological Critique* (transl. Forest Williams), Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1962, p. 120.

characteristic that appertains to some (but not all) imaginative activity and to ignore the wide variety of activities that engage the imagination.

We hear a creak in the quiet of the night and imagine all sorts of possibilities: a burglar, a possum, just the house contracting in the cool evening. From this small sound, we can imagine whole (counterfactual) worlds. We can always synthesise (that is, imagine) many different worlds from any collection of sense experiences. We may consider the set of possibilities we have imagined, and make a judgment about what did cause the creak. One of these imagined possibilities may turn out to reflect the actual state of affairs (or none may). If it is, say, a possum causing the noise, have we imagined that? The mental (world making) process through which we worked to produce the world where the possum is making the noise is of just the same sort as that through which we worked to make the burglar-world. The only difference is that the possum is there (in Sartre's terms) and the burglar is not-there.

We engage in these (imaginative) exercises in response to some external stimulus (namely, the sound). We could obtain additional information (for example, we could get up and investigate, hoping to have further, relevant perceptual experiences). Earlier, I called that kind of action an experiment. This might allow us to better build the worlds of the creak. Of course, we can never amass sufficient experiences to be certain of anything. Even if we get up and see a possum, it is still possible that the creak was caused by a burglar. We can never know, in Sartre's terms, if we have made a right or a false judgment.

Further, if it was a possum, there is no difference in the activity which imagined the burglar and the activity which heard the possum, for the mental processes are similar. Both are, I claim, exercises in imagination. We can take those exercises as far as we wish. I could say to myself or to a companion: "Hear that noise, let's imagine it is a burglar. We shall be attacked, tied up and robbed." This, also, would be an imaginative reaction to the creak, for the prior behaviour is the same

in both the case where we imagine a possum and the case where we imagine the robber. If, post hoc, it is not a robber or it is a robber, that does not alter the earlier imaginative reaction. So, from some (limited) experience (namely, the hearing of a sound in the night) we spin out a series of (possible) worlds. One of these may be (or become) the actual state-of-affairs.

My claim is that all of these activities are exercises in imagination. There is no significant difference in the acts that create these different worlds. One of them may turn out to be the actual state-of-affairs (and that is, post hoc, a very different thing) from the other (counterfactual) possibilities.

I have already said that to act purposively entails an act of imagination. To act purposively, we must imagine a possibility (a counterfactual world) and then we must reason out a way of bringing that counterfactual world into actual existence. If our reasoning is correct and our actions sufficiently resolute (that is, in conformity with our reasoned "plan of action") we should succeed. Worms do not have purposes for they have no imagination (or so I imagine).

There is the word again: I "imagine" worms have no imagination. Here I am not using the term for something that is absent but to suggest how things are. We often respond to a question "what did he mean?" with "I imagine ..." and present a rephrasing of the words to provide our understanding of what was said. Against this it could be argued that such locutions are merely *façons de parler.* I think they represent ways of imagining and fall squarely into the continuum of activities that involves the synthesising of worlds (again, such uses are in Stevenson's list). When we hear the creak, we synthesise alternative worlds or ways the actual world is or might be. We say "I imagine ..." to indicate a degree of uncertainty. But we can never be certain, for there is always the possibility (even if it is remote) that we are wrong. We take some things as known (that we will fall if we jump out a window, for example) but we cannot know that; we imagine it to be so. At some point on the continuum from doubt to certainty, we no longer admit to being

uncertain and we cease to say "I imagine ... ." But it is clear that we are using the same synthesising ability in all cases.

Immanuel Kant saw imagination as a comprehensive synthesising capability; it is this synthesising ability which is the pre-eminent mark of imagination. Kant calls imagination a "faculty", but we need not infer that it is, therefore, an organon of the mind and, if Kant thought so, we do not need to follow him in that. What is important to all the examples of imagination that we have singled out is the synthesising capability that we possess. We use this capability, Kant argues, to understand the most basic aspects of our lives.

For Kant, the imagination operates in, what he calls a productive mode to make the manifold of time and space[250] *a priori*; it is in this spatio-temporal manifold that we locate things. Imagination also operates reproductively to make (or remake familiar) objects. To do that the imagination must hold together concepts and appearances of things and bring them together to make the objects and the other products of our senses. Imagination allows us to recognise an object as, say, a dog, and furthermore, to recognise this dog as the same as the dog we saw yesterday.[251] For Kant imagination is, effectively, the synthesising capability upon which his whole philosophy depends. "Synthesis ... is", he says, "the mere result of the power of imagination."[252] and synthesis is "the act of putting different representations together".[253]

Kant, as we have noticed, distinguishes different modes of operation of imagination. The productive mode spins out our view of the manifold as existing in space-time, and the reproductive mode, operates to make objects within that

---

250 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (transl. Norman Kemp Smith), London: Macmillan, 1990, A123.

251 Ibid., A77.

252 Ibid., A78, B103.

253 Ibid., A77, B103.

manifold. We need not be concerned with such questions. Neither need we concern ourselves with Kant's distinctions of synthetic and *a priori.* It is sufficient, for us, to recognise the operation of the imagination and to recognise its importance in the way we make worlds. What is important here is to note that Kant saw imagination as the animating principle of thought. It is imagination, he tells us, that allows us to synthesise the world from our experience. But, it is also imagination that leads to poetic creation. It is imagination, Kant says, which allows us to synthesise things from our perceptions.[254] Mary Warnock summarises Kant's opinion thus:

> [I]n Kant, the imagination is the very same image-making faculty which works in the depths of our minds to enable us to recognise objects in the world, and link the concepts of them to our actual experience.[255]

When it comes to the arts, we use our imagination to create the artistic object. We use our imagination to see the flattened plane of a painting as representing something — a person with a dog. However, our imagination is constrained in art by our judgment; were it not so, artistic creations would be simply free flights of fancy. Imagination is the source of poetic fancy. "Poetry," Kant said, "expands the mind by giving freedom to the imagination."[256] Imagination "gives life to [the] concepts" of poetry.[257] Yet, for Kant, imagination is more than just that which gives rise to artistic fancy; imagination is an essential tool to the mental life; poetry is imagination's freest expression, but it is only one way in which the imagination expresses itself.

Thus, we can see that Kant uses the term "imagination" in a manner that is close to the way Shelley and I are using the term. I wish, now, to turn to the imaginative

---

254 Ibid., A78;. B152.

255 Mary Warnock, *Imagination,* London: Faber and Faber, 1976, p. 55.

256 Immanuel. Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (transl. James Creed Meredith), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952, p191, (no. 53).

257 Ibid., p. 185, (no. 51).

activity of interpretation of works of art and literature in particular. I will, in the process, examine a couple of well known theories of imaginative use of texts.

Imagination and Texts

We have previously considered, very briefly, some of the claims that Kendall Walton makes in his book, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, and his discussion of the rôle of imagination in fiction; we did this when we were considering emotional responses to a story and Walton's claim that such responses are "pseudo". In his book, Walton presents a number of examples of imagination (or make-believe). He talks about, in some game, imagining that every stump is a bear. This game can be played with any number of players. The stumps act as "props"[258] in the game of make-believe, that is, the game where the players imagine that every stump is a bear.

He also talks about the game of imagining we are in a rocket ship to Saturn. In this case, we play the game together, yet what is going on in each player's mind is (almost certainly) very different. One person may imagine a control system with dials, indicators, levers and flashing lights; another may imagine stars flashing past (even though that is an impossibility, it would still count as imagining being on a rocket to Saturn). Some people might have a mental image (perhaps of the sort just described), some might not have an image at all. Yet we would agree that they were imagining the same thing (namely, a trip to Saturn). We would probably also assent to the suggestion that they were sharing an experience, namely, the experience of imagining they were on a rocket ship to Saturn.

---

258 Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, p. 43.

Walton says that fiction can be defined in terms of imagination. For Walton, a fiction is a work which is a prop in a game of make-believe. "[T]o be fictional is, at bottom, to possess the function of serving as a prop in games of make-believe."[259] Reading a novel is to play the make-believe game. "A work (or a passage of a work) with the job of prescribing imaginings is definitely a fiction in our sense."[260] It is imagination which produces the make-believe result. Imagination is required to play the game of make-believe; it may be that, for Walton, imagination has a wider rôle than just that but, if so, he does not say. Walton also, occasionally, talks of fictional worlds, but the major difference between Walton's and our thesis is the question of make-believe and games. For Walton a fiction is, essentially, a tool (or, as he calls it, a prop) in a game of make-believe; for our thesis, it is a (means of creating a) world. These, it turns out, are different activities. For one, Walton is forced back to his "pseudo" emotions, for one cannot, he says, have "real" emotions in a game of make-believe, where our claim is that one can have real emotions in the face of a tragedy being enacted in a story-world.

Walton usually talks of "make-believe" rather than "imagination," but, as we have observed, he seems to use the words "make-believe" and "imagination" interchangeably. Elsewhere, for instance, he describes the make-believe game of understanding pictures. He says that "the crucial perceptual experience ... is an imaginative ... one."[261] Walton uses the term "make-believe" to provide a definition of fiction, but he never provides us with a definition of quite what make-believe (or imagination) is (although he does provide a number of examples). Walton's making-believe is roughly equivalent to our story-world making. To us the text operates as a story-world maker where, for Walton, it acts

---

259 Ibid., p. 102.

260 Ibid., p. 92.

261 Kendall L. Walton, "Depiction, Perception, and Imagination: Responses to Richard Wollheim", in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 60, (2002), p. 26.

as a prop in a game of make-believe. To interpret the text is, for us, to make the world; to interpret the text is, for Walton, to play the game or to make-believe. The player enters the world of bears in playing the game where every stump is a bear. As Walton tells us, we can step out of that game. This is true of our world making activity also; we can close the book and the story-world is, temporarily at least, closed, for us. The play (be it *King Lear* or the stumpplay) can always be stopped.

For Walton, anything that acts as a prop (while it is so doing) is a work of fiction. History can be such a prop. We can imagine being on campaign in Gaul with Julius Caesar. Walton is very clear that things which are true or in which the make-believer also believes are, nevertheless, fictional, when so used. Things that function as props are fictions. Walton acknowledges that we can imagine something that is "true"[262] and truth, therefore, is not a barrier to something's being fictional. We also, have earlier acknowledged that history can act as a world maker. To read the history is to make the history story-world. That world, if the history is accurate and reliable, will represent our actual world at some time(s) and place(s). To understand a work of history, for example, clearly requires a very similar act of imagination to that required to understand a fiction. On this Walton's argument and our thesis agree. However, we have suggested that fictionality has to do with the nature of the story-world: is it the same as, or different from, our actual world? This definition introduces a degree of authorial intentionality and, so, accords more with commonsense than does Walton's since Walton's definition makes "fiction" a shifting category.

Walton argues that the rôle of the Greek myths was always to serve as a prop in a make-believe game.[263] Those Greeks who believed these myths would still play the game, while believing that the myth represented something about their actual world (in its past). Although, he does not say so, this would also be true, in the

---

262 Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, p. 42.

sense he means it, of most religious writings and activities. The Bible and religious rituals would be props in a game, even where the believer plays such a game believing in its truth. The Christian believer is drawn into the game; the believer makes-believe he or she stands at the foot of the cross. This kind of imagining is central to most religious disciplines. The icon, story, ritual or other religious symbol acts as a prop to imaginative religious devotion.

This thesis also accepts that the activity of story-world making takes place in such a religious setting, for it is an activity essential to the interpretation of any story. However, for us, it is not this which makes the story fictional. Our thesis also recognises that it is not possible to read a story without entering into the imaginative activity of story-world making, for to fail to make the world is to fail to understand the story *qua* story. Further, this thesis argues that understanding the real world and understanding the story are similar activities, where Walton's argument entails that they are different and that a text can oscillate between being a prop (and, thus a fiction) and being an historical account. I have no reason to think that Walton would shy away from this conclusion; it is one that he comes close to acknowledging. I am arguing, however, that the distinction is artificial. Of course, on our thesis, we can believe something to be fictional and treat it so, only to discover that it was (meant to be) a factual account, or vice versa. This result seems to concur with commonsense.

I am arguing that everything we do requires imagination. Walton almost concedes as much. "We are so deeply immersed in make-believe that it infects even theorising itself",[264] he says. However, he says that we need to "extricate ourselves enough to be able to see how pervasive it is."[265] To extricate ourselves is, I say, not possible, for to do so would be to extricate ourselves from the process of understanding altogether. Imagination is the game we are playing and we are

---

263 Ibid., p. 96.

264 Ibid., p. 390.

unable to step out of it. But, Walton does not agree with this, for he identifies things (committee reports and economics textbooks) which, he says, are not fictions;[266] these things, I take it, he thinks do not exercise our imagination. Therefore, he must contrast imagination (operating in a particular manner to create fictions) with whatever we do to understand non-fictional works. He never makes such a comparison; that was not his purpose.

For Walton, when we read (a fiction or some other work, *qua* fiction) we spin out an imaginary world (a world of make-believe). "Fictional worlds are associated with collections of fictional truths; what is fictional is fictional in a given world — the world of a game of make-believe."[267] So, it is true that Elizabeth married Darcy in the (fictional) world of *Pride and Prejudice*. This conforms to the claims we made earlier. Walton extends his arguments to cover all representational works, including paintings and other non-literary works. These are fictional in his sense; we use them as props to the imagination. We have used a small number of paintings as examples but we have not considered such works in any detail; however, Walton's conclusions would, if legitimate, also clearly apply under the scheme we are using.

Walton argues that his scheme provides an explanation of our behaviour at the theatre or the cinema. In a game of make-believe we still get excited and our hearts may start to race, but we know the stump-bear will not harm us. We know that the world of the fiction and the actual world are two different worlds (I agree on that). Therefore, watching a horror film may raise our blood pressure and make our hearts race, but we stay in our seats rather than rush from the cinema in fear. Neither do we rush onto the stage to save the heroine during a play. However anxious we may become, however caught up in the game of make-believe we are, we know it is just that, a game of make-believe. We do not

---

265 Ibid.

266 Ibid., p. 103.

believe that the green slime destroying the world on the cinema screen will harm us; we do not believe the heroine will be killed by the wheels of the train. We do not really believe that the stumps are bears. These things are part of the make-believe and so, we know, we are safe. Our system also explains these things;[268] the explanation is similar but does not rely, as does Walton's approach, on the so-called "pseudo" nature of the emotions, as we saw earlier.

Roger Scruton offers a different account of imagination. He starts by observing that imagination is a species of thought. However, he suggests that imagination is thought that is unaccompanied by belief. If we believe something we are prepared to assert that something (as true). His first cut at an understanding of imagination takes this idea of assertability and defines imagination as thinking that we would not be prepared to assert as true. "Imagination", he says, "is essentially thought that is unasserted, while being entertained as 'appropriate' to its subject matter."[269] When we imagine, we think without asserting. When we think and are prepared to assert (either to ourselves or to other people) we are not, according to Scruton, imagining. Essentially, a fiction is a story we are not prepared to assert (as true) but its contents are appropriate to the subject matter, namely, the story.[270] "The activity of imagination ... is", he argues, "essentially contrasted with belief." This is, for Scruton, an important point.

---

267 Ibid., p. 69.

268 We have not overtly discussed the case where every stump is a bear. In that case, we are using the stumps and ourselves as actors (it is peculiar in that we are acting ourselves or, at least, a surrogate) to make a world, the bearstump story-world. The action takes place in this world but the world represented by the game is a different world. Of course, should we fall and sprain our ankle, that happens in our actual world, just as an interruption to a performance of a play interrupts the performance, which is a thing in actual worlds.

269 Roger Scruton, *Art and Imagination: A Study in the Philosophy of Mind,* London: Methuen, 1974, p. 91.

270 See ibid., p. 99. The reason for entertaining a proposition is to be found in the "subject matter and nowhere else."

Scruton is anxious, as it appears from later passages in his work,[271] to distance himself from views such as that expressed in this thesis that imagination is operative in any synthesising operation including the most basic perceptions. He is very anxious to draw a distinction between thought and imagination. This thesis operates to close that gap, but, otherwise, Scruton's approach and the approach put forward here are readily assimilated. We are not prepared to assert that what is true in the world of the fiction is true of our actual world, or, to put it in Scruton's terms, we would not be prepared to assert that it is so of our actual world. Scruton is concerned with a definition that attempts to separate an imaginative activity, such as seeing a painting as "sad", with one which does not take an aesthetic stance such as this. But, that is simply definition. Scruton admits that it is difficult to draw a distinction between imaginative activity and similar activity which is not imaginative, for he concedes that "[i]t may indeed be difficult to define the vanishing point of imagination where literal-mindedness sets in."[272]

Nevertheless, Scruton's approach has much to say of benefit to this thesis. He is, in fact, recognising the common ground of our response to stories; for him the difference seems to be in assertability, where, for us, that is not a problem; the question, as we have considered it, lies with the world about which assertions are made. Some beliefs we hold lightly; perhaps we would be prepared to assert "maybe", and some we would have to say "not sure". Scruton is not clear, but perhaps those things that we doubt could be non-assertable. But that does not make them a case of imagination (in his terms). For us, there are many sentences about our actual world and about any given story-world that we are uncertain about but could answer "maybe" without a difficulty.

---

271 Scruton, *Art and Imagination*, for example, p. 115 where he specifically says that sensory experience is not a form of imagination and on p. 120, where he specifically distances himself from Kant.

272 Ibid., p. 99.

Yet Scruton agrees that imagination is a species of thinking and this, alone, moves a story into the realm of the understandable. Imagination is central to the way in which human beings think and understand their world. It is not that fiction (or literature) alone is an affair of the imagination. Everything is. We can imagine the impossible. Counterfactual thinking requires, as our earlier discussion implies, an act of imagination; we must synthesise the alternative world that is the subject of the counterfactual. That world may be possible or impossible and we can not be sure which. To understand a simple statement requires a supposedly simpler imaginative act than to understand a complex literary work. Since we are much practised at "reading" the actual world, we are able to perform the imaginative act required to interpret that world or, at least, many of the states-of-affairs that comprise that world, with ease. We do it so easily that we fail to recognise just what an imaginative, creative act it is. All thought and understanding requires an imaginative act and not just the understanding of fiction. This brings us back to Shelley and his claim that imagination is the means whereby we synthesise.

I have now concluded my general discussion on worlds and world making through the activities of symbolisation. In this chapter I have been concerned to show what a close relationship obtains between understanding a written text (a story) and understanding the world. We use the same mental processes (what is popularly called imagination) to make the different sorts of worlds and to integrate those worlds. We can, now, clearly see how it is that stories make sense. However, we have not really exploited the similarities between story-worlds and actual worlds and we have not said anything about learning from stories. Earlier, that problem was identified for consideration. In the next chapter, I want to make good the promise to shed some light on that problem.

CHAPTER 6

Story-Worlds as Metaphors

When we read a story we make a story-world. When we "read" the world, we make an actual world. We do the former when we give the story a meaning (that is to say when we attempt to understand the story). We do the latter when we give our experience a meaning (that is to say when we attempt to make sense of our experience). In each case, the activity of worldmaking is a symbolising activity. In the case of the story, we make the story-world from the symbolisation, which is the text, by resymbolising it as an interpretation of that text; in the case of the world we make our actual world, by symbolising our experience of the world. In each case there may not be a unique, right interpretation of the world or of the text. We make worlds (either story-worlds or actual worlds) using that synthesising ability that we call imagination.

We have seen how this allows us to make sense of stories. We have also seen why we react to stories as we do and how that is possible. We noted that the major difference between story-worlds and actual worlds is that we live in the latter. But story-worlds and actual worlds are, in many ways, similar. So, we react to story-worlds in ways that are comparable to, or the same as, the ways we react to our actual world. So stories can make sense.

In the introduction to this thesis, I said that I take it for granted that stories do more than just make sense. I stated that they can have value and can be important

to us. Obviously, senseless stories could not have value, for they could not be used to make any sort of understandable story-world. However, we have not yet shown how stories, which can support the making of such story-worlds can be worth reading or have value or can teach us things. Neither have we yet explained why people attend the tragedy or read sad stories. Why do people willingly submit themselves to the distressing scenes of *King Lear* or *Othello*. Having sketched out a mechanism as to how we can understand stories, it is now time to turn to this further problem.

But, before we launch into these new questions, we should note some of our earlier findings. We have previously discussed the possibility of overlap between the story-worlds made from fictional stories and actual worlds. I wish to revisit this question briefly. I read a story and make the story-world. I take it that the story-world is like my actual world (in certain respects). This must always be so, for if the story-world were utterly unlike my actual world, the story would be incomprehensible to me. It is sometimes argued that we can get information (about this world) from stories. They give us information about places, for example, London, historical events, for example, the life and times of Ned Kelly, and people, for example, the emperor Claudius. But I have argued previously, that this is not so. I have argued earlier that a story gives us no warrant for "facts" about an actual world. Any warrant as to "facts" about my actual world must come from my actual world. If the author of a fiction tells me things, which are not true of my actual world, I have no claim against her on that account. Of course, I may take the author's claims about the story-world as also being accurate claims about my actual world. But, if I turn out to be deceived, I have no claim against the author of a fictional story on that account.

Conan Doyle's London is not the London of an actual world, for Sherlock Holmes lives in the story-world London (and he lives at 221B Baker Street in that London) but there is no such person living in any actual world London. These two places, the story-world London and my actual world London, share a common name and,

no doubt, many characteristics: characteristics such as being cold and foggy, having a river called the Thames and so forth. In general terms, we have a warrant for supposing "facts" about the story-world London but not the reverse. The warrant for the story-world London goes only so far and that warrant arises from "facts" about our actual world London. Statements in the story (for example to the effect that there is a dwelling at 221B Baker Street) defeat any presuppositions about the story-world London that arise from my understanding of my actual world London. Nevertheless, the warrant comes from an unstated agreement used by authors (but occasionally broken for effect).[273] But that warrant goes in a single direction.

If we want to know about the climate of London, we would do better to consult a weather report than Conan Doyle. If stories teach us things, it must be in ways other than this.

Secondly, we can note that it is often argued that stories have entertainment value. I do not wish to dispute that. Stories are often very entertaining. There are many stories which are (almost entirely) exhausted by their entertainment value. Stories such as adventure stories are written and read for escapism. We often want to read a story that is easy to read and will carry us along with the action. I will contend in the next chapter that many romances (as well as adventure stories) fall into this category. Most, probably all, stories have some entertainment value, for who would read them if they had none? But, entertainment is not incompatible with some further value.

Collingwood talks of amusement as separate from art and life. By amusement he means what I am calling entertainment. Collingwood says that amusement is enjoyable "because there is a watertight bulkhead between its world and the world

---

273 For example in Offenbach's operetta, *Orpheus in the Underworld.*

of common affairs."[274] He suggests that a work, considered as an entertainment, discharges its total emotional content "within this watertight compartment."[275] There is no residuum remaining from a work, considered as an entertainment. A work (if there is one) that had only entertainment value would be pure escapism. Collingwood was principally concerned with questions that are not within the scope of this thesis,[276] yet it is clear that he is right (on this point): entertainment alone, is not sufficient to explain how a work can have any didactic value. But escapism and entertainment may well explain why certain stories are popular. This is not to say that there is no value in reading such stories. Obviously there is; to escape for a time, may be immensely valuable, but it would be, as we will see, an unusual story that could offer nothing at all beyond that.

As we have said, there is no need to eschew entertainment as a value in reading. Many stories are written and read primarily for entertainment and escapism. We will consider this further in our next, and final, chapter. In this chapter, however, we want to identify a mechanism that will explain why we think stories can teach us about this world. To do that, I want to turn to a consideration of metaphor. We will do this by way of Paul Ricoeur's book, *The Rule of Metaphor*. It may seem, initially, that we have lost our way and diverted into some sort of byway. But, by the time we have finished this investigation, we will have shown how stories can have a didactic value, in addition to making sense. We will see why stories may be important.

---

274 R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, London: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 78.

275 Ibid.

276 He was primarily concerned with the question "what is art?"

Metaphor

It is impossible to do a book of the scope and breadth of Ricoeur's work justice here. I will, however, attempt to follow the major thread of his argument and to set out his major conclusions, so that we can relate them to our current problem. In *The Rule of Metaphor*, Ricoeur traces the development of philosophical thinking about metaphor from Aristotle through to more recent work. In the process of doing so, he puts forward his own analysis of metaphor and how it operates. He makes great claims for the power of metaphor.

Ricoeur commences his discussion with Aristotle. Aristotle, he says, "defined metaphor for the entire subsequent history of Western thought."[277] Aristotle said of metaphor that it is the "application of a noun which properly applies to something else."[278] While Aristotle considered a good metaphor to be the sign of a great rhetorical style,[279] Ricoeur argues that the discussion of metaphor that (usually) flows from Aristotle's consideration is based upon the word. Metaphor becomes a verbal trick and is merely a rhetorical "ornament" having a "decorative" function.[280] Aristotle is not in error in doing this, says Ricoeur, but he then argues that metaphor is more extensive than Aristotle's analysis admits. His own discussion widens the notion of metaphor to take in sentences, then complete works and, eventually, complete *œuvres*.

---

277 Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multidisciplinary Studies in the Creation of Meaning in Language* (transl. Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello), Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977, p. 3.

278 Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1457b.

279 Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric* (transl. H. C. Lawson-Tancred), London: Penguin Books, 1991, 1405a8-9.

280 Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 46-47.

Max Black dubbed Aristotle's approach to metaphor, a substitution approach.[281] Substitution treats metaphor as relating to the word. The author of the metaphor has made a substitution of a word. The reader reverses that substitution, replacing the substituted word with the correct one to recover the true meaning. Consider a simple and hackneyed metaphor such as "Richard is a lion". Substitution treats the word "lion" as a substitute for "brave". The substitution is effected and the sentence becomes "Richard is brave". The reader's attention is momentarily arrested while the "puzzle" is solved and then the reader moves on, admiring the poetry of the writer's metaphor. Treated thus, metaphor is merely a stylistic device.

Such an understanding of the operation of metaphor is, said Black, rhetorical and not philosophically interesting.[282] This limitation led some writers to see metaphors as disguised comparisons or similes. Richard is being compared to a lion and may exhibit more than one quality. The rhetorical trick, now, is to decide which qualities and substitute those for the metaphorical word. A metaphor, thus, becomes a shorthand way of saying something a little more complex than the simple substitution view would imply.

Ricoeur's philosophical project is to show, in *The Rule of Metaphor*, that language is itself creative; that it creates the content of what it says.[283] Substitution or comparison theories of metaphor will not do that trick. A substitution is reversed without any linguistic remainder. Ricoeur does not argue that metaphor does not operate in this manner, merely that there is, or can be, more to its *modus operandi* than such schemes imply. Ricoeur next considered the writings of I. A. Richards.

---

281 Black, *Models and Metaphors,* p. 31.

282 Ibid., p. 45.

283 This thesis of Ricoeur's follows, of course, from the argument put forward in chapter 3.

Richards suggested that metaphor goes well beyond a simple substitution or comparison. In fact, Richards saw all language as essentially metaphoric. Language cannot be pinned down to the meanings of single words for words do not have stable and definite meanings. To think that they have is to be beguiled by what he calls the "Proper Meaning Superstition".[284] The Proper Meaning Superstition is the belief (beloved, he claimed, of rhetoricians and those who teach "proper" writing) that words have certain fixed meanings (preferably only one such meaning) of their own. Words, he said, "as they pass from context to context, change their meanings; and in many different ways."[285] Furthermore, that is their "duty and service."[286] If they did not do that, we would never be able to say so many different and subtle things with the resources (only a few thousand words) of language. Further, he observes that "we are extraordinarily skilful"[287] in detecting and understanding the constantly shifting pattern. To emphasise this last point, Richards says, rightly I believe, that we are very good at detecting new or unusual uses of words; we are very skilled at attributing meaning to what is said, even if what is said is unexpected or phrased in an unusual manner.

Richards said, of metaphor in particular, that a metaphor consists of two parts or two ideas, in the case of our example, Richard and the lion. These two parts, he called them the tenor and the vehicle,[288] interact to produce the metaphorical "truth". The tenor is the thing being metaphorically described and the vehicle is the base against which it is being described. We have, Richards says, a

---

284 I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1965, p. 11.

285 Ibid.

286 Ibid.

287 Ibid.

288 Ibid., p. 96.

"borrowing between and intercourse of thoughts".[289] This approach to metaphor has become known as an interaction approach.[290]

Max Black took up Richard's interaction approach in some influential writings on metaphor. Black said, using a different terminology, that the metaphor causes us to see one thing, which he called the focus, through the frame of the other. The metaphor organises[291] our view of Richard; that is to say that the frame acts as a lens through which we see the focus.[292] In our example Richard is the focus and the lion the frame. Black observes that a metaphor acts both ways. If we come to see the lion in Richard, we also come to see Richard in the lion. The more we consider the metaphor, the more information we find packed into it.

But not all metaphors are of the form "x is y." Some metaphors seem to use a word which cannot be applied literally to the focus.[293] This is the thrust of Beardsley's article "The Metaphorical Twist".[294] Not all metaphors, Beardsley says, compare two things. Metaphors can apply an adjective oddly or describe an action in an unusual manner and still be, clearly, a metaphor. For Beardsley, metaphoricalness arises from the way language is used; the way language is used exhibits what Beardsley called a linguistic twist or, as he said, a metaphorical twist. The example of this that Beardsley put forward was "th'inconstant moon."[295]

---

289 Ibid., p. 94.

290 Black's term, *Models and Metaphors*, p. 38.

291 Ibid., p. 41.

292 Ibid., p. 236.

293 In saying this, I am using the term literal in its common usage sense. I do not wish to be read as endorsing the view that there is such a thing as literal language in contradistinction to, so called, figurative language.

294 Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Metaphorical Twist", in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, XXII, (1962), p. 301.

295 Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2, Scene 2, line 109.

The debate between Black and Beardsley led Mooij to look for a wider theory of metaphor, a theory that would encompass the metaphors put forward by Beardsley as well as those from Richards and Black.[296] He proposed a way of looking at metaphor that combines three elements: reference to the primary object of the metaphor (Richard, the moon), reference to a secondary object (the lion), and surprise (inconstant). A metaphor might only exhibit some of these qualities. "Richard is a lion" has only a primary and a secondary reference; Mooij classifies that as a dualist metaphor (having two of his three elements) while "th'inconstant moon" has only a primary reference and is classified as monistic. Having said this, Mooij, nevertheless, suggests that dualist comparisons are the more common and more interesting form.[297] They are the kind of metaphor that will be of most interest to us.

Mooij also notes that protagonists from both camps put forward, as exemplary, metaphors that are restricted in some way but support their particular claims. A metaphor that exhibits the full range of possibility would be Shakespeare's metaphorical description of time as a beggar in *Troilus and Cressida*:

"Time hath ... a wallet at his back, Wherein he puts alms for oblivion."[298] This is one of Ricoeur's favourite metaphors.

Davidson, writing after Ricoeur published his work, claims that a metaphor has a literal meaning and that meaning is false (for Richard is not a lion).[299] This very falseness causes the interpreter to look for some way of understanding what the

---

296 J. J. A. Mooij, A *Study of Metaphor: On the Nature of Metaphorical Expressions, with Special Reference to Their Reference*, Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1976.

297 There is another form of trope, which possesses some of the properties of metaphor: namely, the obvious statement. "No man is an island" is a good example of this form.

298 Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, Act 3, scene 3, lines 145-146.

speaker wants us to understand. Davidson's argument, of course, contradicts Richards' basic position, for Davidson's claims presuppose The Proper Meaning Superstition. To Davidson, meanings are (relatively) fixed.

Davidson accuses Richards, Ricoeur and Black (with whom his debate is had) of arguing that "a metaphor has, in addition to its literal sense or meaning, another sense or meaning."[300] This is its metaphoric meaning. However, none of these writers makes such a claim. For Richards, the meaning changes. For Ricoeur, this process certainly creates a surplus of meaning, or a new meaning, but not an "additional meaning" in the way that Davidson claims. On this debate, it is clear that I am siding with Richards; meaning slides and cannot be fixed. Words must be allowed to vary their meaning for, otherwise, language would lose its shading and words would become precise and unambiguous tools, an outcome that some would like. In our quote from *Troilus and Cressida*, it is not that some words are used "literally" and others "metaphorically". It is that the whole sentence is to be understood in a certain manner.

Black, in a reply to Davidson, accused Davidson of "providing no insight into how metaphors work and fails to explain why ... metaphor [is] an indispensable resource."[301] He suggested that Davidson's explanation merely treats metaphors as "perversely cryptic substitutes for literal similes."[302] However, we cannot allow this question to sidetrack our entire discussion, which it could do. We must note the point and recognise the implications for our argument. To a large degree, the result is not important (we are not pursuing a linguistic argument as such), for Davidson concedes that metaphor is capable of doing the work we require of it.

---

299 Donald Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean", in *Critical Inquiry*, 5, (1978), pp. 31-47.

300 Ibid., p. 33.

301 Max Black, "How Metaphors Work: A Reply to Donald Davidson", in Sheldon Sacks, *On Metaphor*, 1979, p. 189.

302 Ibid., p. 190.

He prefers to classify that accomplishment, not as part of the meaning of metaphor, but as "what they [words] are used to do."[303] He says that meaning and use are distinct. The concession that metaphor accomplishes the task that Ricoeur sets out to demonstrate will, if allowed, suffice for our purposes.

To return to Ricoeur's analysis.

Black and Ricoeur consider that metaphor goes much further than simply comparing one thing with another or operating as a linguistic device. Substitution and comparison approaches to metaphor see metaphor as marshalling an already existing connotation. But, everything is like everything else, and everything is different from everything else. Metaphor does more than just notice and draw attention to similarities; it brings our thoughts to bear on the situation to actually create similarities.

For Ricoeur, metaphor "does not merely actualise a potential connotation, it creates it."[304] Black also says of metaphor that it "creates the similarity."[305] Ricoeur says that language is creative. Richards says that metaphor depends upon an "intercourse of thoughts."[306] The ideas or linguistic tokens interact to create meaning. Interaction is a, potentially, unending process. The metaphor spreads like ripples on a pond. Meaning arises and new meaning can keep on arising; there are always new interactions to be found. Neither Richard nor the lion will stay the same and, as we reflect upon the metaphor, both the focus and the frame continue to change. We see the frame through the focus but we see the focus through the frame.

---

303 Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean", p. 33.

304 Paul Ricoeur, "Word, Polysemy, Metaphor: Creativity in Language" in Mario J Valdés, *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*, 1991, p. 79.

305 Black, *Models and Metaphors*, p. 37.

306 Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric, p.94.*

Substitution and comparison are not a sufficient explanation for the power of metaphor. Richards comments that thought (which he equates, rightly, I believe, to language) is essentially sorting.[307] This is not the place to attempt to produce a theory of mind, but Richards is saying that to recognise and select some impressions from the vast amount of data coming into the mind, it is necessary to sort those data and to select material to process. In abstracting qualities and types (qualities such as white) we must select certain aspects of things. In doing that, we tend to think of our intellectualisation of things as the recognition of some already existing "primordial abstractness."[308] This is, essentially, the same claim, couched in different terms, that we considered in chapter 3. I will argue that metaphor allows us to sort (in Richards' sense) and select the impressions we have. This is, effectively, the operation of imagination as discussed in the previous chapter. Thus, not all metaphors arise from similarity. Some metaphors gain their potency from difference.[309]

It is not surprising that it is so difficult to get a grasp on metaphor. It is the very basis of all our language. "Thought is", says Richards, "metaphoric."[310] Metaphor is, he says, language's "constitutive form."[311] We are always comparing and sorting, noting or looking for differences and similarities. The operation of our minds is metaphoric in Richards' sense. We must balance our thinking against what we see; we must see the world through the focus of our linguistic resources and we must see our linguistic resources through the focus of the world.

We have already noted that metaphor is a common, indeed essential, part of our speech. Black himself uses metaphor to describe metaphor; I think that is because, in order to say something significant and new, he must use language in

---

307 Ibid., p. 36.

308 Ibid.

309 Ibid., p. 127.

310 Ibid., p. 94.

new, and, therefore, metaphoric, ways. As well as focus and frame, he talks about the metaphor as a "filter"[312] or a "lens"[313] and as "organising"[314] the way we see things. Richards, with his "tenor" and "vehicle" terminology does the same. This leads Richards to claim that "metaphor is the omnipresent principle of language."[315]

A metaphor does not revolve around just words. Its operation is, rather, a function of larger units of discourse. A change in either the focus or the frame produces a different metaphor. Use of what most people would call the same metaphor, in different contexts, can produce very different meanings. The discourse surrounding a metaphor is also part of the frame because it creates the overall setting of the metaphor. For example, Black suggests that, in a text about wolves, the metaphor "man is a wolf" will, itself, be framed by the remainder of the discourse. What we learn about wolves in that discourse will influence our understanding of the part of the text that we usually call the metaphor. If we change the frame (in this wider sense), we change the metaphor.[316]

Similarly, the metaphor will work differently for different foci. The metaphor of Richard and the lion, applied to Richard I of England in an historical work, would be different from the "same" metaphor in some other work. It would be different applied to some one else. It would also be different appearing in a novel set in Africa and different again in a treatise on nature. We cannot expect to replace the "metaphorical" part of a discourse with a regular substitute to recover the real meaning. Sometimes the metaphor seen in isolation is just a puzzle; it may even

---

311 Ibid., p. 90.

312 Black, *Models and Metaphors*, p. 39.

313 Ibid.

314 Ibid., p. 41.

315 Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, p. 92.

316 Black, *Models and Metaphors*, p. 28.

mislead. A complete discourse or a "whole poem [may be] needed for the mind to invent or find a meaning."[317]

Black puts it as follows. In discussing the metaphor: "man is a wolf" he says that the wolf-metaphor "organises our view of man."[318] Indeed, Black says it is not even important that our ideas or knowledge of a wolf be accurate for the metaphor to work, merely that they should be "readily and freely evoked."[319] A metaphor may not transport from one society to another because the ideas associated with the frame may be different in different societies. Black does not give an example of what he is thinking of here, but his "man is a wolf" metaphor would surely convey different meanings to an Australian and an Inuit. "A memorable metaphor", says Black, "has the power to bring two separate domains into cognitive and emotional relation by using language directly appropriate to the one as a lens for seeing the other."[320]

Consider the following lines from Shakespeare, mentioned earlier: "Time hath my lord," says Ulysses, "a wallet at his back, Wherein he puts alms for oblivion."[321] Ricoeur says that this sophisticated metaphor "opens [meaning] towards a dimension of reality that does not coincide with what ordinary language envisages under the name of natural reality" while still being "faithful to the profoundly human reality of time."[322] Much of the power of Shakespeare's lines arises from the lack of similarities between time and a beggar. As we ponder the metaphor, it produces more meaning (or more shades of nuance). In this example, the interaction of apparently very different things produces a powerful metaphor.

---

317 Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor,* p. 82.

318 Black, *Models and Metaphors,* p. 41.

319 Ibid., p. 40.

320 Ibid., p. 236.

321 Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, Act 3, scene 3, lines 145-146.

322 Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor,* p. 211.

This power of metaphor to cause things to interact is how language operates to create meaning. Nietzsche put the operation of language as metaphor thus:

> we believe that we know something about the things themselves when we speak of trees, colors, snow, and flowers; and yet we possess nothing but metaphors for things — metaphors which correspond in no way to the original entities.[323]

This is, of course, to argue, as we have with Goodman, that language (or, more generally, symbolisation) is the tool we use to make worlds. The way we use language to make worlds is, for Ricoeur, language's basic metaphoricity. To change the way we have discussed world making and align it with Black's terminology we can say that we learn to see the world through the lens of language and the demands of the language system; we interpret any given statement under the terms given within the system. We must learn how to see things, we must learn to see them in some manner; we have no option. The interaction of language and the world is not a simple one-way street but a dialectic where we come to reflect our experience of the world in our language, and come to see the world in terms of the language we use to describe it. Language and the world form the focus and frame of the whole language system. As I have already argued, by providing us with a means of describing the world we learn to see the world in just the manner that language requires. So, language operates as a metaphor for how things are.

Paul Ricoeur provides us with a subtle analysis of (metaphoric) language, an analysis where metaphoricity spreads from the word with Aristotle to the whole of a discourse. The meaning of the term "metaphor" has become more and more encompassing as we consider the ways in which language works. Language is metaphoric to the core. Haack comments that, if we are not careful, we run the

---

323 Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense", in Daniel Breazeale, *Philosophy and Truth*, 1979, p. 83.

risk of allowing the term metaphor to mean so much that it means nothing.[324] Maybe so. But, if all language is metaphoric, then the term encompasses more than the rhetoricians use it for. It may still be possible for rhetoricians, as opposed to philosophers, to restrict the term's use, for certain purposes. But such a restriction is, we can see, arbitrary and not philosophically adequate.

Black still does not think that his account is complete, for he tells us that a full description of the operation of metaphor "remains tantalisingly elusive".[325] We lack, he says, "an adequate account of metaphorical thought."[326] This should not surprise us, for an adequate account of metaphorical thought would be an adequate account of the full functioning of language. That may, forever, escape us ,and is certainly beyond the scope of this thesis.

Story-Worlds as Metaphors

We have several ideas at work here. The first is the idea that a metaphor causes things to interact. The second is the idea that all language is metaphoric and that metaphor spreads to encompass complete discussions and all language. The third is the idea that metaphor teaches us things and creates (new) meaning. We give the metaphor meaning. For Ricoeur, the more one considers metaphor, the wider is its compass. These ideas build on and extend our discussion of world making. Language extends its power to make meaning and to make worlds.

---

324 Susan Haack, "Surprising Noises: Rorty and Hesse on Metaphor", in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 88, (1987), p. 181.

325 Black, "How Metaphors Work", p. 192.

326 Ibid.

To build on these ideas, Ricoeur takes up the idea that stories are, themselves, metaphors. Roman Jakobson tells us that poetry has a referential function as well as a poetic function. This is what makes poetry ambiguous. He says that "the double-sensed message finds correspondence in a ... split reference."[327] This split reference is, he claims, "cogently exposed in the preambles to fairy tales."[328] We say, "once upon a time." Jakobson tells us that the Majorcan's say, "'Aixo era y no era'" (It was and it was not)."[329] Even "once upon a time" seems to set the story everywhere and nowhere. There is a sense in which Davidson is right. A metaphor says something which, considered in a certain way, is false. Juliet is not the sun. But it also says something which, considered in a different way, is true. Juliet is, indeed, the sun. So, a story (text) refers to the story-world (in a literal manner). But the story-world, taken as a whole, can be treated as a metaphor for how things are, in an actual world. In a sense, it can be said of any metaphor, and, thus, of a complete story, that things are so, but are not so.

Ricoeur tells us that reference can be construed as relating to words but, at a second level, reference is a function of "entities that are larger than the sentence."[330] At this wider level we can be looking at complete works (or even larger entities, such as complete *œuvres*) to identify the reference. We will limit this discussion to complete works (texts), and to stories in particular.

Ricoeur says, of texts, that a "text is a complex entity of discourse whose characteristics do not reduce to those of the unit of discourse, or the sentence."[331] In other words, we cannot break a discourse down, without remainder, to its

---

327 Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics", in Thomas Sebeok, *Style in Language*, p. 371.

328 Ibid.

329 Ibid.

330 Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 216.

331 Ibid., p. 219.

components. Discourse exhibits that quality we call synergy;[332] the effect of the totality of a discourse is created by the sum of its parts (namely, words) but it is not exhausted by those components. A text is greater than that. This is so of even the most humble discourse and is so with a story. The complete text allows us to make the story-world. So, if the complete text is metaphoric, what is the focus and what the frame?

At one level, the focus is the story-world and the action contained therein. That is, clearly, what the reader concentrates on. That is what we get excited about and why we cry for Anna. We read the story to see what will happen; we are unable to put the book down. But, with many works, we put the book down when we have finished reading, but the story continues to reverberate with us for some time, often measured in years or even lifetimes. We are doing more than allowing the story to make its world, we are, I will argue, applying that world, metaphorically, to this, our actual world. I have already argued that the text is a mimetic artefact and that it represents. It represents the story-world. But we are now in a position to take our analysis to another level and suggest that the story-world is itself the frame within which we focus on our actual world. That is Jakobson's split reference. That is the "Aixo era y no era." Poetry, Jakobson says, refers to this world, but ambiguously so.[333] Just as it is not unambiguous exactly why "Juliet is the sun", neither is the metaphoric meaning of the story-world unambiguous. If it were, it would be possible to rephrase the metaphor (that is the story) without remainder. Further, it is, says Ricoeur, "fruitless ... to look for something to justify the metaphorical application of a predicate."[334] He says that if we ascribe the predicate "sad" to a picture, we do so metaphorically. What grounds can we adduce to justify that ascription of that predicate? Yet, we see that the particular

---

332 Many things are synergistic: computer systems, the mind, collections of cells to make living organisms and so on.

333 Jakobson, "Closing Statement, p. 371.

334 Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 236.

ascription is right (or, we may say that it is not). The making of metaphor is a creative use of language.

Before completing this part of our discussion, we will follow Ricoeur as he makes an unexpected detour through Max Black's discussion of (scientific) models. Black identifies three sorts of model. The first sort is the scale model: a model such as a model of the Queen Mary or of an insect (made larger). His next sort is an analogue model where the model "reproduce[s] as faithfully as possible ... the structure or web of relationships in an original."[335] There is a mapping between the analogue model and the thing or process being modelled. A mathematical system is a good example of such a model. At the third level, Black identifies what he calls theoretical models. These he describes more by way of example than anything else. Electrical fields may be discussed as if they were rubber bands or a description of something, called ether, may be provided. Such models allow conclusions to be drawn and tested, but they are, essentially, no more than ways of talking about the matter and its attendant problems. They allow the user of the model to observe new connections and to derive new knowledge from the application of the model to problems at hand. Such models, Black contends, function like metaphors.[336] In Ricoeur's terms, following Mary Hesse,[337] such a model, like a metaphor, is a "redescription"[338] and functions, by this redescription, to reveal new truths.

No paraphrase of the situation can yield (quite) the same result. Models are, or may be, elaborate and have ramifications spreading a considerable distance. Further, Ricoeur points out, following Black, that only some things in the model

---

335 Black, *Models and Metaphors*, p. 222.

336 Ibid., p. 236.

337 Mary Hesse, *Models and Analogies in Science*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970.

338 Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 242.

are pertinent to its use for scientific purposes.[339] It is important to grasp those aspects of the model and to ignore possible false leads arising from details that turn out to be irrelevant. Ricoeur quotes Black: "The heart of the matter consists in talking in a certain way."[340] The model is not simply a statement but a complex of ideas that are brought to bear on the phenomenon under investigation. We should note that the model redescribes the reality to which it refers (it may become part of how we see the world, which is to say, it may become part of our actual world). Black quotes scientific writers, Duhem and Braithwaite, for example,[341] who see such models as no more than a crutch for feeble minds, in the case of Duhem, or as a convenience but one not to be confused with the reality it models. There is, these physicists claim, a risk that the model will be projected as the thing modelled rather than as just a model. It might be argued that ether, the atomic model of the atom, or the idea of the soul, have done just that.

This brings Ricoeur back to Jakobson and the claim that a poem is about this world. We can now propose a method by which a story may function to tell us about this world and to do so in a powerful way. The story-world is, or may be, a metaphor for our actual world. Goodman says much the same:

> Fiction ... whether written or painted or acted, applies truly neither to nothing nor to diaphanous possible worlds but, albeit metaphorically, to actual worlds.[342]

"Cervantes and Bosch and Goya", he says, "... take and unmake and remake and retake familiar worlds, recasting them in remarkable and sometimes recondite but eventually recognizable ... ways."[343] Goodman, however, insists that fictions are not true. He says that "[a]lthough all fiction is literally false, some is

---

339 Ibid., p. 241.

340 Black, p. 229, quoted in Ricoeur, p. 241.

341 Black, *Models and Metaphors*, pp. 233-236.

342 Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking*, p. 104.

343 Ibid., pp. 104-105.

metaphorically true."[344] This last claim of Goodman's sails very close to the claims made by Davidson; we do not wish to follow him there and we are not suggesting that fiction is "false".

So stories tell us things. We should now recognise some of the things we have noted about metaphors. They do not tell us things from a point of no knowledge but, rather, from a perspective of knowing something. A metaphor brings recognition. We read a story and we recognise that is how things are. We cannot apply the "facts" in the story to our actual world but we recognise how things are just the same. We cannot simply apply the "facts" about the sun to Juliet; yet, Juliet still is the sun; certain things about the sun are not relevant to Juliet. The sun is approximately 150 million kilometres distant from the Earth; we cannot say that Juliet is 150 million kilometres distant from the Earth. Yet, she may be very distant; Romeo may consider that she is unattainably distant. The metaphor operates to produce new knowledge on an ever-widening basis. The more we think about the metaphor, the more we recognise; we recognise that Juliet is distant. We go to see a play and we can ponder on its "meaning" for a very long time. A rich metaphor has a widening circle of meaning where a poor one is quickly exhausted.

The metaphor operates to change the frame as it changes the focus and vice versa. We read the story; we make the story-world. The story-world operates as a metaphor for our actual world. As we ponder on the story, so we remake our actual world, but we also come to reappraise the story and we also remake the story-world. This process is, conceptually, unending. For a great story, a story such as *King Lear*, we may go on doing this all our lives. As we mature and increase our experience and the sophistication of our actual world making, we can return to such stories again and again to find fresh (metaphoric) meaning. It is, at this level of discourse, that the two worlds interact. Let me repeat, we see the story-world through the lens of our actual world (in many detailed ways and in its

---

344 Goodman, *Of Mind and Other Matters*, p. 124.

general mode of operation) but we see this world through the lens of the story-world. This process is, potentially, unending. Story-worlds and actual worlds may interact, for they are the same sorts of things (intentional objects describing some external "reality"). A metaphor consists of (basically) two words joined with the copula and, the two things may be brought into a fruitful relationship. A story-world and an actual world may, similarly, be brought into a fruitful relationship.

Some metaphors operate as much through a wealth of detail as they do in a broad sweep where others operate more in a broad sweep and the detail must be treated as incidental (at least, to the major metaphoricity of the work). As Ricoeur suggests, the metaphoric use is implied and subtle; it may be recognised or it may be overlooked or ignored, although some works cry out to be treated metaphorically. For example, *Endgame* seems to demand such a treatment; it is hard to imagine that someone would want to read it, were they not prepared to treat it metaphorically. How can it mean anything otherwise? As with any metaphor, the details of the two worlds may become of overriding importance or the "truth" of the metaphor may be recognised in the broad generalisation of events and personages, or there may be recognition at both levels. Some stories operate more by allegorical application than through, what we normally consider to be, metaphor. The story-world represents, by some sort of (direct) analogy, truths, or supposed truths, about this world. The mediaeval romance or Arthurian legend[345] is a good example of this type of thing; a modern example might be Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. The story-world parallels, in a fairly direct manner, how the world is (or is supposed to be). One may, on inspecting the world of the allegory, decide that the state-of-affairs in the actual world, is unsatisfactory. Ricoeur refused to grant this type of allegory the same status as metaphor. The

---

345 For example, *The Quest of the Holy Grail* (transl. P. M. Matarasso) London: Penguin, 1969. In this quest the details of the story have a direct analogy with, then, current theological perspectives. For todayís reader much of the allegorical detail is obscure.

allegory has completed its work, and there is no residue, when the allegorical meaning has been unravelled.[346] However, it is reasonable to suggest that a story which operates as an allegory, does so as if it were a detailed metaphor. Such analogical uses are, as so often, a matter of degree.

For Ricoeur an allegory is a parallel story about our actual worlds and not about the story-world at all. The allegorical treatment subsumes all the story details to a parallel in this world; it is a direct mapping onto this world. To draw the allegory, it is necessary to draw the map in terms, not of the story-world, but of this world. That is not to say that the allegory may not also be treatable as a story in its own terms. *The Crucible* is, at the same time, a powerful metaphor about "witch hunting" and also a powerful indictment of McCarthyism. The correct understanding of an allegory, *qua* allegory, may well depend upon certain knowledge of this world and even of authorial circumstances. To see *The Crucible* as an indictment of McCarthyism, it is, from this distance in time, necessary to see the situation being addressed by Miller. However, from this distance in time, the play is probably more usefully read as a metaphor of intolerance and suggestibility. Read that way, we make the The Crucible story-world and see its metaphoricity.

Ricoeur reaches back to Aristotelian mimesis. He argues, as have we, that mimesis is misunderstood as, simply, imitation.[347] It operates through the complex metaphoric device we have mapped to give an imitation, but that is a metaphoric imitation. Or, we could put it in Aristotle's terms and suggest that such an imitation reveals the universal.[348] We see our actual world, as we have said previously, universalised through the metaphoricity of the story-world. The

---

346 Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*, Fort Worth, TX: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976, p. 56.

347 Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, pp. 37, 39.

348 Aristotle, *The Poetics*, 1451b.

story does, indeed, hold up a mirror. What we see in that mirror is not simply a pallid reflection of some supposed reality but a powerful reflection of how things are, even if the image has been distorted to reveal that.

So we now have a mechanism whereby stories can teach us things. Even the most unlikely story (stories about men changing into beetles) can be productive metaphors. It is probable that stories which are less "realistic" and seem to be further removed from us operate more powerfully this way that do simpler and more direct stories by making unexpected juxtapositions.

Currie and Ravenscroft observe that we are sad for Desdemona and we want her to be saved. Yet we would not want to change the text.[349] Therefore, we would not want to change the story-world to bring that about. Most people prefer Shakespeare's *King Lear*, where Cordelia is lost, to Nahum Tate's revision, where she is saved and there is a happy ending. That is, I claim, because the Shakespeare original is a better metaphor where the revision fails; it is (at best) a poor metaphor. This is why we "enjoy" the tragedy. We learn through the experience. We might note that few people would want a diet consisting only of such works. A life spent entirely with tragedies, however, much they might teach us, would be stressful indeed. Most of us feel quite wrung out by a night of such drama; we "enjoy" and appreciate *King Lear* but we still feel "wrung out" by it. A leavening of other works: comedies, murder mysteries, magazines, or whatever, is normal for us. The mix, of course, will be different for each of us. That is not to say that only tragedy can have the metaphoric effect. Of course a comedy can have that affect also. We learn from such as A *Midsummer Night's Dream* about ourselves, sexuality and so forth.

I am arguing that we attend the tragedy and we learn from the experience. As Aristotle claimed, the learning experience is enjoyable, despite the method of learning, because we are learning through it. Some forms of story — for example

---

349 Currie and Ravenscroft, *Recreative Minds*, p. 20, p. 196.

the popular horror story discussed earlier — may appeal for this reason or for other reasons. Currie and Ravenscroft argue that the rewards of fiction are emotional ones, though the particular emotions evoked in a given case may not appear to be rewarding."[350] Emotions, they argue, are a form of awareness. Without them, I would add, our enjoyment of the story would be lessened and our understanding of its metaphoric (or other) impact would be severely reduced. We respond to stories in many different ways. That has already been observed and the claim of Currie and Ravenscroft adds to that argument.

Olsen argues that the metaphoric thesis advanced here is not the full story either. He calls theories such as ours, autonomy theories.[351] Olsen argues that, in a metaphor, the interaction works between the parts: between Juliet and the sun. In a text, he says there are no such parts. There is no "other" part of the text against which the text can interact. But we have just shown that there is another part, namely, the actual world, which is to be found outside the text itself. Olsen further suggests that different readers will recover, or gain, a different "payoff"[352] from a text. He suggests that such a payoff may depend upon the level of sophistication of the reader. Of course that is so; different readers with different levels of understanding will react differently to the metaphoricalness of any text. A metaphor depends upon the background of the person interpreting it. A completely unsophisticated reader will just see *King Lear* as a sad story and may well prefer, as many have, the happy version. Olsen, further, identifies other reasons to enjoy something. In a poem, his example is D. H. Lawrence's *Piano*, there are other features, stylistic ones or aesthetic ones, contributing to the work. There will always be many factors contributing to a work and contributing to our enjoyment of it. This thesis agrees with the points made by Olsen, but these

---

350 Ibid., p. 189.

351 Stein Haugon Olsen, "The 'Meaning of a literary Work", in Lamarque and Olsen, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art - The Analytic Tradition: An Anthology,* 2004, p.177.

352 Ibid., p. 181.

points do not destroy our claims.[353] We go to the theatre to enjoy a performance of a complete work and not to ruthlessly extract just some metaphoric meaning, but if there is no satisfactory meaning, I claim, the experience will be more shallow than if there is. That is all.

Stories are, we have just argued, such complex things that their operation cannot be restricted to just a single mode. A story may operate to beguile one's attention as entertainment, require one to puzzle over details of the story-world (as does, say, a murder mystery — the classic who-done-it) while also providing a detailed analogue of this world as well as a more generalised metaphor for how things are. In fact, most stories, even the most banal, will be open to such a multiplicity of interpretive strategies. We have already commented on the dialectic operating between the story-world and our actual world. The dialectic we have noted previously is, in the context of this chapter, the operation of the interaction of the metaphor at a simple or a complex level. We may, thus, derive all sorts of details from stories and so, for example, stories are often used as case studies for moral questions. We can see why!

Story-worlds and actual worlds interact and the two sorts of worlds interanimate each other. If it were not so stories would be, as Bentham suggests they are, dead things and of no more than passing interest. A visit to a story-world would be diverting or entertaining, but could teach us nothing. On the metaphorical view of stories that is being considered here, we can hardly help but react to the story's metaphoricalness. This can be why the metaphoricalness is so powerful. We are immersed in stories from childhood. We absorb their message and come to see the world in the manner described by stories. It is hard not to do so.

As children we read, and are read, fairy stories, often the same stories many times. Many of these stories operate to maintain and justify the status quo. If read uncritically (as children will), it is easy to see how they operate to do this. If we

---

353 Olsen does not argue that they do.

consider the simple children's story "The Princess and the Pea", we will see that princesses are different from the rest of us. A real princess will not sleep because of a pea placed under many soft mattresses. A "commoner" will not notice. Similarly, a story such as "Bambi" reinforces the idea of primogeniture. If we consider Monteverdi's opera, *The Coronation of Poppeia*, to which we referred earlier, we know that, in the actual world, the rest of the story of Nero and Poppeia proceeds in a certain way and we suppose that, in the story-world, they will proceed in a similar fashion. It is difficult not to apply that knowledge to the story-world and to derive suitable (metaphoric) conclusions. We need not, of course, do that; there can be no reason why, in the story-world, things could not turn out differently from the way the (related) events turned out in actual worlds. We will consider this aspect of our problem further in the next, and final, chapter.

Before we do that, I would like to consider some more complex story-worlds to see how they can operate metaphorically.

King Lear and *Endgame* as Metaphors

We have mentioned *King Lear* several times as we have pursued this work. I will say only a few brief words about it by way of illustration. Jan Kott is a Polish commentator on Shakespeare, who has, fortunately for us, been translated into English. His theme is that Shakespeare is always relevant and tells us about ourselves and our times, rather than just the times of Elizabethan England. The writings of Shakespeare are, in Kott's opinion, as relevant to Poland as they are to England or Australia and as relevant to Kott's time of writing (1964, his work is not recent) as to the Elizabethan era or to the twenty first century. His view is that

"Shakespeare is truer than life."[354] Kott says of King Lear that the "theme of *King Lear* is the decay and fall of the world."[355] The blinded Gloucester is assisted to jump from a cliff into the abyss, in order to commit suicide. But, of course, there is no cliff; Edgar has deceived (with the best of motives) his father. Kott comments that "the precipice at Dover exists and does not exist. It is the abyss, waiting all the time. The abyss, into which one can jump, is everywhere."[356]

Harold Bloom, in a much more recent commentary, makes somewhat different, but not incompatible, claims. Bloom tells us that Lear's torments are central to almost all of us, "since the sorrows of generational strife are necessarily universal."[357] We read *King Lear* and "[w]e are at once estranged and uncomfortably at home."[358] The characters are, he says, "ravaged by all the ambivalences and ambiguities of familial love and its displacements."[359] But the love is hardly redemptive; in Lear's bleak world, not much survives. Bloom comments that "[l]ove redeems nothing — on that, Shakespeare could not be clearer."[360] Again, Bloom observes that "Lear is not a study in redemption ... Mortality is the ultimate outrage we all of us must endure. All you can place against mortality ... is love."[361] If we expect to find some sort of divine justice, we will find the play "offensive".[362]

---

354 Jan Kott, *Shakespeare: Our Contemporary* (transl. Boleslaw Taborski), London: Methuen, 1964, p. 221.

355 Ibid., p. 123.

356 Ibid., p. 117.

357 Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: the Invention of the Human*, London: Fourth Estate, 1999, p. 477.

358 Ibid., p. 476.

359 Ibid., p. 488.

360 Ibid., p. 506.

361 Ibid., p. 510.

362 Ibid., p. 493.

So, we see that, for Kott, the play is a metaphor about the decline and fall of the world (that is, this world) and Bloom thinks in a similar way. For him the play is about the deprivations of mortality. There can be no redemption but love, always painful, offers us, not exactly hope, but a way of putting some value into our few years. Of course, each sees the play in slightly different ways and emphasises different aspects of its metaphoricity. But to each of them the "message" is, though metaphoric, clearly conveyed. So, too, is the message of "Juliet is the sun" clearly conveyed. Yet, the metaphorical meaning is not unambiguous or able to be pinned down. It is not that Kott is wrong or that Bloom is wrong (in fact their writings have a common core, but emphasise different aspects of the play). That is how metaphor operates, for we each see the world differently and, thus, our approach to a work at this level, will differ. This conclusion is entirely in accord with the whole thrust of the argument we have been putting.

Many people consider *Endgame* to be "difficult". By that, they mean to imply that it is not readily interpreted. It is, by its very nature, ambiguous; that is to say, there are many things we are not told about the story-world. Many of these we would like to know. The ambiguity of the story opens the play up to a variety of interpretive strategies. David Hesla says that the play is "difficult, but by no means impossible, provided we respect its elliptical quality and its multifaceted character."[363] We have already noted that metaphor is uncontrollable and that it can spin off in ways not "intended" by the author.

There are problems with the construction of the Endgame story-world, but these are not the sorts of problems to which Hesla was referring. There are questions about what lies beyond the room; why are the characters "confined" to that space; what is on the face of the picture (we only ever see its reverse) and so on. Despite all of this, most people make the Endgame story-world similarly. We do not seem to find the significant differences between Endgame story-worlds that we found

---

363 David H. Hesla, "Metaphor in Endgame", in Patrick A. McCarthy, *Critical Essays on Samuel Beckett*, 1986, p. 173.

with the The Turn of the Screw story-worlds. In the case of *The Turn of the Screw*, we noted the existence of radically different constructions of the story-world (apparitionist and non-apparitionist story-worlds) but with *Endgame*, this is not the difficulty. In *Endgame*, there are unanswered questions but these are not the source of the difficulty; most interpreters agree on the main outlines of that world. The difficulty is, simply, how does the story-world operate as a metaphor for our actual world. There are many possibilities; so many that *Endgame* could be described as overdetermined. The play, with its bewildering multiplicity of interpretations, is elliptical in its metaphoricalness and provides a multifaceted metaphor. Ultimately, this leads to a fragmented understanding of the play as metaphor.

I am more concerned, here, to illustrate the thesis advanced here, by reference to some of the possibilities found by different commentators on *Endgame*, than I am to come to a conclusion about how to see the play and its application to our actual world. There are many possibilities canvassed by those commentators and I have made a selection from a small number of commentators to illustrate my claims. Many of the possible ways of understanding the play arise from the play's intertextualities and to the references that the text makes beyond itself.

Most people read *Endgame* as giving a pessimistic vision of human life. Many commentators see the play as about death and endings. Richard Coe sees this as a preoccupation of all Beckett's plays[364] and Michael Robinson tells us that the characters are, not in Hell but in "Purgatory: a Purgatory of waiting on the verge of timelessness."[365] It is difficult not to notice the name of the play and recognise a reference to chess. Most commentators notice this. But not all agree on the implications. Hesla says that Nagg and Nell are captured pieces and are consigned

---

364 Richard Coe, "Molloy", in Patrick A. McCarthy, *Critical Essays on Samuel Beckett*, 1986, p. 85.

365 Michael Robinson, "Belacqua", in Patrick A. McCarthy, *Critical Essays on Samuel Beckett*, 1986, p. 34.

to a bin, while Hamm and Clov are the king and another piece (perhaps the knight). He adduces the fact the Nag and Nell have faces which are "very white" where Hamm's and Clov's are "very red" to support this claim.[366] James Acheson disagrees and says that red and white oppose black. He argues that all four characters are on the same side of the game and are opposing black, which is death.[367]

Many commentators, perhaps taking their clue from *Waiting for Godot*, see the metaphor as about endless waiting, so that one wishes the waiting (for death) would end but one is unable to bring that desideratum about. Worton points out that chess can get to the stage where we are in the endgame but no one can win. Bad players can find themselves moving around the board indefinitely.[368] Again the waiting seems to be endless and the moves made by the players, senseless and purposeless; they merely defer the end (possibly indefinitely) but for no benefit. Clov threatens to leave but never does; he is always on the point of departure, but departure never takes place.

For Cavell, the story-world is probably set after a nuclear war,[369] not a unique suggestion.[370] At the time of Cavell's writing in the 1960s, this suggestion must have seemed natural. He adduces some evidence to support this suggestion: the room is referred to as a "shelter" and the players are incapable of leaving the room. Cavell also notes the similarity of the name "Hamm" to the name

---

366 Hesla, "Metaphor in Endgame", p. 173.

367 James Acheson, "Chess with the Audience: Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*", in Patrick A. McCarthy, *Critical Essays on Samuel Beckett*, 1986, p. 181.

368 Worton, "Theatre as Text", p. 67.

369 Stanley Cavell. *Must we Mean What we Say? A Book of Essays*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1976, p137.

370 Acheson, "Chess with the Audience", p. 181, for example, also comments on this possibility.

"Ham".[371] Ham was the son who saw Noah naked. Cavell suggests that the room is Noah's ark (perhaps it has come to rest after the nuclear storm). He adduces various facts about the room and the props for the play to support this claim: the single high window — above water line, the view of the sea, the gaff. But, unlike Noah's ark, there will be no repopulating of the world: we are in the endgame.

Hamm's is not the only name subjected to the search for clues. Cohn runs through a considerable number of possible allusions.[372] She also points to many intertextualities. Other commentators have suggested that the room is like a skull from the inside. Hesla suggests, on this basis, a Cartesian, dualist interpretation. The room is the interior of the head and the two windows are the eyes. Hamm is, then, the mind which is immobile in the centre of the skull. Clov becomes the body, the servant of the mind, able to perceive (looking out the window) for the mind and so forth.[373] This is an intriguing way of understanding the metaphor.

Perhaps, we can leave this brief analysis of *Endgame* at this point; our purpose has been, merely, to illustrate the thesis that we are arguing.

No commentator takes the Endgame metaphor as unambiguous. This is what Ricoeur and Black tell us about metaphor, and complex metaphors in particular. The metaphor shifts and moves so that it cannot be pinned down. There is a surplus of meaning, so we can never say (quite) the same thing in any other way. We must note that we are not giving the story an "extra meaning" in Davidson's terms. This kind of meaning is, however, what Hirsch calls "application" and what Davidson calls "what words are used to do". As I have argued, I prefer to see this as part of the meaning of the text. Unless we do this, the text must be seen as thin. What we are doing here is to attempt to sketch out ways in which the

---

371 Cavell is not the only one to see this possible connection. Ruby Cohn also notes this similarity. Ruby Cohn, *Samuel Beckett: The Comic Gamut,* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1962, p. 230.

372 Cohn, *The Comic Gamut*, pp. 226-242.

metaphor operates to give meaning at the metaphoric level of discourse. The play would be bare, indeed, if it had no meaning beyond itself. All we can do is sketch out possibilities, for no metaphor is quickly exhausted (but we might give it scant attention); we can ponder on a story-world such as this for a very long time. Commentaries, thus, indicate approaches and, perhaps, make connections that many readers would not otherwise notice. Thus, they can enrich the reading experience and make the text more approachable. But they do not exhaust or replace it. To suggest that the meaning of "Juliet is the sun" arises from the life-giving force of the sun and from its bringing day and light, is hardly to exhaust the metaphor. But it is to indicate ways of considering it.

Further, we notice that the metaphor is not closed, meaning continues to arise. Not all aspects of the two parts of the metaphor are fit for exploration. Juliet may well be the sun, but, as we have already observed, she does not float 150 million kilometres from the surface of the Earth. The metaphor may operate to contrast things as well as draw likenesses. The room may well be the ark. The characters in the play may have ridden that ark through the nuclear tempest. But they will not repopulate the Earth. They have only two animals (a flea and a rat) and these, they kill.

This thesis shows that such meanings are a logical outcome of the way we can "read" the text as a whole and that this sort of meaning is continuous with the work as a whole. Further, the metaphoricity of a work runs through the whole work and the details of the world made from that work add, as we can see, to the complexity and detail, and, therefore, meaning, of the story-world as we draw parallels and interpret the work in a given way.

Probably all works operate metaphorically, at least to some extent. I have argued that a metaphor is a dialectical thing and that we see the lion in Richard as well as Richard in the lion. All works do this to some extent. They must because nothing

---

373 Hesla, "Metaphor in Endgame", p. 175.

can be sealed into its own watertight compartment. Everything overflows and everything must overflow if we are to make sense of our world and if we are to make that world (and our lives) into connected wholes. This discussion brings us back to Aristotle and to Plato, where we began. A metaphor does, in a sense, hold a mirror up to the world to reflect what is there. However, this reflection need not be a crude reflection as was Plato's mirror but Aristotle's "idealised" reflection. If there is genius in stories (plays and novels in particular) then that may arise from the power of the story to redescribe the "reality" it finds in the world. For Aristotle, metaphor, as a rhetorical device, is a key to the good use of language. Metaphor, he said, "involves clarity, pleasantness and unfamiliarity, and it cannot be drawn from any other source."[374] Where Aristotle may have been thinking of fine use of language, we can see that his admiration for a good metaphor did not go far enough.

Danto also comments on metaphor as a stylistic device. He suggests that, the very act of filling in and giving meaning has the effect of personalising that meaning. In modern terms we come to "own" the meaning we give. Danto observes that the enthymeme requires one to fill in the missing premise(s). In doing that, we take on ownership of those premises and we "draw our own conclusions" treating those conclusions as a personal acquisition.[375] Thus, enthymeme is a more powerful rhetorical device than is the syllogism, where all is plainly stated. In the same way he suggests that metaphor is a more powerful device than a mere telling.[376] The whole story, thus acts as a powerful rhetorical way of saying, often, very simple things, things which, if said more "prosaically" would not seem worth the saying.

In fact, this is a point that Stolnitz makes. he thinks that it shows that an approach such as ours is insignificant. Stolnitz argues that the metaphoric meanings

---

374 Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, 1405a8-9.

375 Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, pp. 169-170.

376 Ibid., pp. 171-172.

adduced from stories are, at best, "banalities ... garden variety truths."[377] He suggests that any metaphoric meaning we can give to *Pride and Prejudice*, his example, or *King Lear*, our example, will turn out to be trivial. However, his argument only serves to strengthen our claim. Banal and garden variety do not point to lack of importance. A meaning can be banal, yet true. The truth that we get old and decrepit and (eventually die) is hardly unimportant yet, when put thus, is certainly banal. To say "Juliet is the sun" is one thing; to say "I like Juliet" is another, yet similar, thing. We agree that Stolnitz makes a valuable point, namely, that the story can point up great and important truths, truths that, reduced to simple terms, would seem to be clear, obvious and not worth the saying. Perhaps we might say that the story also leads us to a better understanding of such truths and can show them to us in a new light. We often avoid this sort of knowledge but, when brought face to face with King Lear, we cannot do that. Further, the metaphor is vague, as Stolnitz says and the meanings extracted from works depend upon the reader. All this we agree with and has been implied by the discussion above. I can only repeat what Aristotle has told us: that to say something in a metaphor can elevate the saying and what is said; it can further bring to our attention important truths in a way that makes them matter and be important (even if, put otherwise, they would be banal).

Stories can be powerful and redolent with important meanings for us. Now we can see why and how. Their message can be inescapable. At least, John Carroll thinks so. He argues that the West has given up its myths and stories and succumbed to the scientific story.[378] That story has, he claims, given us a sort of material prosperity, but taken away our human (that is spiritual) heritage leaving

---

377 Jerome Stolnitz, "On the Cognitive Triviality of Art, in Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art - The Analytic Tradition: An Anthology,* Oxford: Blackwell, 2004, p. 341.

378 John Carroll, *Humanism: The Wreck of Western Culture*, London: Fontana Press, 1993.

us empty. He argues, in another book,[379] that we must recover those stories that are of greatest importance to an understanding of our being as human (he calls these stories "archetypes"). We do not need to agree with the detail or the conclusions of Carroll's argument, to agree that stories are important and that they can shape us as human beings.

We noticed, at the very beginning of this thesis, Aristotle's claim that the tragedy idealises and helps us to understand the commonplace.[380] We now have a mechanism whereby we can see Aristotle's idealisation operating through metaphor.

What stories can teach us, and how they achieve that, may be more important, not less. Further, it is not only tragedy that can teach important truths. Comedy does that also. If the lessons from *King Lear* are about age and decrepitude, the lessons from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are about sex: two topics of abiding significance, interest and importance for human beings.

Schier argues in a similar way suggesting that painful stories, his examples are *King Lear* and *Winterreise*, are worth the lesson.[381] We get "into" the characters, Schier argues, in a story, in a way that we do not achieve otherwise.[382] This was our earlier argument. We "see into" the story-world; we draw close to the characters and scenes represented there. We react in natural ways. But we learn something about the world as a consequence. The metaphor is more vivid than Stolnitz's banal truth can ever be.

---

379 John Carroll, *The Western Dreaming: The Western World is Dying for Want of a Story*, Sydney: Harper Collins, 2001.

380 Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1451b.

381 Flint Schier, "Tragedy and the Community of Sentiment", in Peter Lamarque, *Philosophy and Fiction*, 1983, p. 84.

382 Ibid.

CHAPTER 7

Junk and Pemberley

In my introduction, I claimed the thesis that we are considering, is better able to "explain" the phenomena in question than are alternative hypotheses. Further, I claimed that the thesis applies to stories in a quite general fashion to provide a useful insight into the working of any story, fiction or otherwise. We have worked with numerous examples along the way. These have, I claim, demonstrated that the thesis is, indeed, able to achieve just what was promised. I now wish to put it to a final test. I want to use this final chapter to run a case study (of sorts). My aim here is, therefore, to show how this thesis can be applied to works which would normally be considered to inhabit different parts of the literary canon — the works (well, just one) of Jane Austen and those published by Mills and Boon. If I can do that, I have further advanced the claims of this approach.

I will start with a brief discussion of the works published by Mills and Boon, under the general title of Harlequin, and of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, then I will attempt to apply the thesis to these works. To do this I will give a brief overview of a typical Mills and Boon story followed by a brief (but not scholarly) analysis of the novel by Jane Austen. We have, of course, referred to the Austen novel in passing more than once.

Mills and Boon and Jane Austen

There are thousands of Mills and Boon novels published every year under the title Harlequin. The genre, if not the publisher, of the Harlequin is hardly new,[383] and it is possible to read no more than a very small selection of them, yet I comment on them as if they were assimilable one to the other. Further, the novels I have read were randomly selected rather than being a considered choice (I can randomly select them because I know, in advance, that they are all the same, yet people who read them in great quantity — and there are many — select them with care). I seem to be claiming to know what they all contain on the strength of a very small sample. I wouldn't be so audacious with Jane Austen.

Here is how Tania Modleski characterises a typical Harlequin:

> [A] young, inexperienced, poor to moderately well-to-do woman encounters and becomes involved with a handsome, strong, experienced, wealthy man, older than herself by ten to fifteen years. The heroine is confused by the hero's behaviour since, though he is obviously interested in her, he is mocking, cynical, contemptuous, often hostile, and even somewhat brutal. By the end, however, all misunderstandings are cleared away, and the hero reveals his love for the heroine, who reciprocates.[384]

There is little doubt that her characterisation of these novels is accurate; the novels all seem to present the same plot with only simple and limited variations. So predictable are the plots of these works that Modleski comments, of the reader,

---

383 See, for example, David R. Shumway, "Romance in the Romance: Love and Marriage in Turn-of-the-Century Best Sellers", in *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, 29, (1999), pp. 43-55. Shumway discusses some of the early romances and their importance in establishing the idea of the "love match". Shumway's discussion, incidentally, suggests that people's actual worlds come to resemble the worlds of the stories.

384 Tania Modleski, *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass produced Fantasies for Women,* London: Routledge, 1990, p. 36.

that she "already knows the story, at least in all its essentials"[385] as she reads. But there are differences in detail in the stories and, so, the story-worlds made from these texts, although very similar, are all different.

The books are written very much to a formula. Modleski quotes the publishers guidelines on the matter:

> Harlequins are well-plotted, strong romances with a happy ending. They are told from the heroine's point of view and in the third person ... The books are contemporary in setting and the settings can be anywhere in the world as long as they are authentic.[386]

The commentaries on these works do not treat of single works but consider the genre of the Harlequin romance as a whole. I have not encountered a single article or chapter of a book which treats any single complete Harlequin as, itself, a text for critical analysis or interpretation. The books are used interchangeably to illustrate the (usually sociological) points made by the authors of the articles and books. The commentator conflates all the works into one. This is, as I have already suggested, easy to do.

These commentators agree that the novels are simple in terms of their plot and simplistic in terms of the characters and scenes they present. They contain little descriptive content. Watson points out that the descriptive content is limited to describing the heroine's appearance and dress together with her view of how she is presenting herself. The stories' settings are described in terms of rooms and their furnishings; the stories, despite their exotic locations, could be set anywhere.[387] Feelings are always running at extremes. Hearts don't merely beat; they thud against breasts. She is either in agony or in ecstasy.

---

385 Ibid., p. 32.

386 Ibid., p. 37.

387 Daphne Watson, *Their Own Worst Enemies: Women Writers of Women's Fiction,* London: Pluto Press, 1995, p. 83.

The sentences are short and crudely put together and their vocabulary is restricted. The plot is always presented in a simple, straightforward linear mode. If there is a subplot, it is restricted, and related directly to the two major characters.

The heroines are always beautiful and, when required, wilting; the heroes are always handsome and "superbly masculine" (whatever that means). The heroines are not stupid. Many have interesting jobs. Claire, in *Woman to Wed*?, is a teacher in a school for handicapped children and Lauren, in *The Father of Her Child*, is a publisher's agent. Yet the heroes of the stories have better (and usually more glamorous) jobs and more money than the heroines. The heroine's career seems to conveniently fade out as the hero moves to the centre of her life. The apotheosis of these works comes when the heroine realises that her life is fulfilled by the hero; her beautiful destiny as a human being is to love and be loved, protected and nurtured by a man, while herself being the passive recipient of his tender but masterful attentions.

The heroine is, thus, always on view and very self-conscious. She is, according to Amal Treacher, "throughout the narrative sexualised ... [and] ready for, and passively awaiting ... the next sensual charge with the man ... [who is] an icon of perfect sexual masculinity."[388] The stories are simple and told by an authoritative narrator in a serial mode. Consequently, the story is not open as is *The Turn of the Screw*, to the making of a multiplicity of different story-worlds. Any world made from the text must be one of a very close family. This is no criticism; it is also the case with the Austen novel.

I want, here, to look at three strands of critical comment: the Freudian analysis of Jon Cook and the feminist, sociological analyses of Daphne Watson on the one hand and those of Janice Radway and Tania Modleski on the other. None of these

---

388 Amal Treacher, "What is Life Without my Love? Desire and Romantic Fiction", in Susannah Radstone, *Sweet Dreams*, 1988, p. 84.

critics comments on particular novels; their critique is based on a syncretised, generalised Harlequin-type work.

Jon Cook talks of Harlequin romances in terms of Freudian patriarchal psychology. "The heroine of popular romance falls in love with the man of her dreams, but the man of her dreams turns out to be an emblem of patriarchal authority itself."[389] The man of her dreams is physically stronger and often treats the heroine badly early in the story because of a misunderstanding. He is attracted to her but sees her as a threat; the possibility of rape hovers in the background.[390] Michael wrongly believes that Lauren has destroyed his first marriage (through pushing feminist beliefs onto his first wife), so he makes vindictive and malicious claims about her. Brad wrongly believes that Claire is having an affair with her first husband's sister's husband (a wimp and a foil to the heroic Brad). "The rejection" Cook says, "... can only be temporary because the hero's violence is an aspect of his strength, and it is the strength the heroine wants, because the definition and purpose of her desire is to be possessed by strength."[391] When the misunderstandings are cleared away, she is so possessed, attaining to both the state of daughter as well as the state of lover.

The heroes very often come from dysfunctional families, families where they are the father figure to their brothers and sisters. When Claire marries Brad, it is obvious that she is joining a family where Brad is the father and protector, a rôle he has had since his early adult years (due to the death of his and his siblings' parents). Parents are either relegated to the background or, as in this case, conveniently disposed of. Parents would only interfere with the romantic denouement.

---

389 Jon Cook, "Fictional Fathers", in Susannah Radstone, *Sweet Dreams*, 1988, p. 154.

390 Ibid., p. 156.

391 Ibid.

The sociological critique of Watson and Radway and Modleski is feminist, but not unanimous. Harlequins are written by women for women; there is a different genre (no less ideologically unsound) for men. The first, and obvious, strain of the critique of these works is to attack the conservatism of these writings as upholding the romantic fairytale of patriarchy (the fairytale described by Cook). Daphne Watson says, of Harlequins, that "they offer a distorted picture of the world."[392] She describes them as "pernicious" and as offering "all the challenge of a warm bath or a box of chocolates."[393] Her concern is that these novels put forward a patriarchal dream, where the heroine depends on the man for emotional (and other) fulfilment. The novels are, thus, cruel hoaxes holding out a false, unrealistic and, ultimately, undesirable possibility. Since the reader's life cannot be like that of the heroine, the reader must end her reading dissatisfied. And, it is not only women who are subverted by these stories. Ann Jones suggests that the "ideology of masculinity in Mills & Boon may be more rigid (and oppressive to men) than the guidelines through which the heroines are produced."[394]

There is another strain of feminist criticism which, Watson suggests, seems to baulk at the wholesale denigration of a genre which is popular with women. Watson suggests that some commentators are reluctant to appear to criticise the reading taste of a large number of women. Janice Radway and Tania Modleski view the Harlequin and its reader as a sociological phenomenon. Radway surveyed a group of these readers, asking them how they see the novels. She concluded that women read these romances as a way of escaping into a world which they recognise to be, in many ways, idealised. The Harlequin world is not how it is and the readers, Radway claims, are very much aware of this. "Romance reading", she argues, " releases women from their present pressing concerns in

---

392 Watson, *Their Own Worst Enemies*, p. 94.

393 Ibid.

394 Ann Rosalind Jones, "Mills and Boon Meets Feminism", in Jean Radford, *The Progress of Romance*, 1986, p. 214.

two different but related ways."[395] These ways are: firstly as an escape from the humdrum circumstances of their lives allowing them to "escape figuratively into a fairy tale"[396] and, secondly, as an entertainment. This is a sort of emotional catharsis. Thus, she suggests, that "romance reading originates in a very real dissatisfaction and embodies a valid, if limited, protest."[397] Tania Modleski talks of these novels as a sort of "revenge fantasy."[398] The plot usually portrays the man as hostile early in the story. The virtue, goodness and innocence of the heroine overcomes the superior strength of the dominating male. He is brought to his knees and we realise that all along he has been "internally grovelling, grovelling, grovelling."[399]

Watson explicitly rejects the readings of Radway and Modleski. Readers of these works read extensively in the genre and, therefore, reread the same story constantly even if they only read each novel once. For Watson, the continual encounter with the conservative ideology contained in them must be damaging to women's best interests. Radway disputes the effectiveness of Watson's view and argues that "the commonplace view that ... the romance[s] impose an alien ideology upon unsuspecting if not somnolent readers is a function of a particular theory and method."[400] Radway is prepared to concede that one theory may not apply to all readers. It may be that, for some readers, these novels do disarm the counter impulse.[401] Even if this is so and readers do not succumb to the supposition that life could be as these stories portray it, it is difficult to evade

---

395 Janice A. Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature,* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984, p. 90.

396 Ibid., p. 93.

397 Ibid., p. 220.

398 Modleski, *Loving with a Vengeance*, p. 45.

399 Ibid.

400 Radway, *Reading the Romance*, p. 8.

401 Ibid., p. 213.

seeing the popularity of these books as somehow arising from the supposed desirability of the fantasy presented.

-0-

Modleski's outline of the plot of the typical Harlequin, cited above, is very much an outline of the main plot of Jane Austen's novel, *Pride and Prejudice*. *Pride and Prejudice* is a tale told in serial mode; the story is a "well-plotted, strong romance with a happy ending ... told from the heroine's point of view and in the third person[;] ... it is contemporary in setting." Its contemporary setting is, of course, that of early nineteenth century England, when it was written. It seems to (but, later, I will suggest that it does not) accept the social and moral contingencies of the day. In Austen's day, a young woman without means depended on an advantageous marriage to maintain her position in society and the world. The happy ending of *Pride and Prejudice* does see Elizabeth happily settled in a most advantageous marriage.

We have already noted the dearth of critical analysis of individual Harlequins. This is not true of Austen and her works. There is an immense literature on all aspects of Austen's work: her life and times, her letters, the corpus of her work as well as the individual novels and comparative analyses of these and other writers' work. Reginald Farrer goes so far as to say of this novel that it is "the greatest miracle of English literature."[402]

But, it is not my purpose here to survey the canon of English literature and the high place occupied in that august canon by Austen's novel. My concern is to attempt to suggest why Austen's novel receives such critical acclaim compared to

---

402 Reginald Farrer, quoted from B. C. Southam, *Jane Austen: Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice and Mansfield Park: A Casebook,* London: Macmillan Press, 1976, P. 159.

the Harlequin. This difference does not lie in the main outline of the plot. This is why I wish to compare the worldmaking of the two: one is so highly regarded while the other has become only a vehicle for sociological comment.

Elizabeth Bennet is a woman with a lively and independent mind. She certainly marries above herself, if we look at social position and money, but she has married an equal (or even below herself) if we take intellect and personal characteristics into account. Lauren Magee, in *The Father of Her Child*, is a woman with a good and interesting career who marries above herself in terms of money but also in terms of wit. It would be difficult to describe her mental states; all we ever know about them are her extravagant feelings of love and hate and her view of herself and her clothing (seen in the mirror).

It is easy to see the marriage of Elizabeth to Darcy as a Harlequinesque capitulation and endorsement of the status quo. Yet, Lloyd Brown suggests that Austen had a "decidedly unromantic and realistic perception of marriage."[403] He points to the number of marriages displayed in the novels (in *Pride and Prejudice*, there are several established marriages as well as several new ones) and to the frequent failures of those marriages. Mr. and Mrs. Bennet are not a happily married pair. Pinion, on the other hand, suggests that "*Pride and Prejudice* illustrates Jane Austen's feeling that true love is based not on wealth or rank but on natural attraction"[404] — a much more romantic conclusion. Vivien Jones, writing in the introduction to the Penguin edition of *Pride and Prejudice*, compares the ideas of Mary Wollstonecraft with those of an evangelical religious writer of the day, Hannah More. "Elizabeth," she says, "is clearly much closer to Wollstonecraft's rational femininity and 'independence of mind' than to More's

---

403 Lloyd W. Brown, "The Business of Marrying and Mothering", in Juliet McMaster, *Jane Austen's Achievement*, 1979, p. 27.

404 F. B. Pinion, *A Jane Austen Companion: A Critical Survey and Reference Book,* London: The MacMillan Press Ltd, 1976, p. 95.

ideal of a 'submissive temper' and 'forbearing spirit.'"[405] It is not that Austen is a feminist in Wollstonecraft's meaning but she has her own ideas about behaviour.

Harlequins have a single story line and two characters (any others are merely props), and these characters are flat and uninteresting. Harlequins are set in exotic and affluent situations around the world, but these settings are irrelevant to the story and can be altered at whim without any effect. Austen's novels, however, are populated with characters and situations. The characters interact. We see them in many lights. The stories abound in subtle insights and ironic descriptions. The settings are limited but tightly and carefully drawn; the settings are integral to the story. An anonymous review suggested in 1813, when the novel was first published, that:

> Instead of the whole interest of the tale hanging upon one or two characters, as is generally the case in novels, the fair author of the present introduces us, at once, to a whole family, every individual of which excites the interest, and very agreeably divides the attention of the reader.[406]

For Austen, the characters are the lifeblood of the novel. They are set off against each other to present many aspects of personality and many types of person. Some of Austen's characters, Mr. Collins for example, are rich caricature (yet there are people like that) where others are more realistic. Walton Litz suggests that the "sense of completeness [of Austen's novels] has much to do with the way in which she invents, establishes and develops the characters."[407] He comments on the balance, within the works of schematic and realistic characters and the ways in which they are like us.

---

405 Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, editor's introduction, p. xvii.

406 Quoted from Southam, *Jane Austen*, p. 148.

407 A. Walton Litz, "'A Development of Self': Character and Personality in Jane Austen's Fiction", in Juliet McMaster, *Jane Austen's Achievement,* 1976, p. 75.

Harlequin romances sometimes use an ordinary marriage as a foil to the spectacular marriage of the heroine and hero. Claire had an unconsummated prior marriage and Lauren and Michael both had failed and unhappy prior marriages. Michael's client, Evan, who has a small supporting rôle in the novel, is a contented, happily married, but dull character. We learn little about such characters or their circumstances. This is not what Austen shows us. Her marriages are part of the kaleidoscope of life that she presents. The "other marriages" are more than a foil (although they do act in that capacity); they contribute to the "meaning" of the work.

Marriage, in Austen's world, regulated society. Yet, there is an inner tension in the novel. The marriages we see (both established and new) bespeak an irruption of disorder into an ordered world. Lydia's elopement is the most obvious example. This tension pervades the novel in various ways. Julia Prewitt Brown[408] comments that the narrative voice itself speaks in terms of order, where the many dialogues speak in anarchical terms.

Tanner weaves together a number of ideas.[409] He suggests that the novel is about recognition. Recognition is also a theme in *Oedipus Rex* and *King Lear.* But in Austen's novel the result is happy and we have a comedy, for recognition comes to Lear and Oedipus too late, but to Elizabeth and Darcy recognition comes in time. Things are, thus, not always as they seem and we must balance conflicting evidence (Elizabeth, for example, takes Wickham's comments about Darcy at face value but later recognises their falsity). Our opinions derive from our perceptions. Yet often those opinions are not correct (for our perceptions are limited) and we must revise them. We cannot know that our first impression is wrong; often first impressions are quite correct (no one misjudges Mr. Collins).

---

408 Julia Prewitt Brown, *Jane Austen's Novels: Social Change and Literary Form*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979.

409 Tony Tanner, *Jane Austen,* Houndmills: Macmillan Education, 1986.

Tanner also talks of performance. There are many dialogues in the book and people are often performing. Mrs. Bennet, for example, adopts her rôle (of the mother finding husbands for her daughters) and performs with thoughtless ease. Elizabeth does not perform as demanded; this is what wins Darcy over but sets others tut-tutting. There is the question of social and mental space: distances between people socially and mentally as well as the space occupied by the protagonists. Lady Catherine and Elizabeth are set far apart both socially and mentally, but to different advantage in these two spheres.

Worldmaking

We have considered some critical and some sociological comment on these novels. How does the discussion of two novels assist our overall discussion of worldmaking? The claim being made is that two novels represent, at least, two story worlds. So we want to consider how *Pride and Prejudice* makes the Pride and Prejudice story-world. We will select one of the Mills and Boon Harlequins, Emma Darcy's *The Father of her Child*, to consider the The Father of her Child story-world. I want to show how these two works make their own particular story-worlds. and what benefits a reader might obtain from the making. I will attempt to show how the previous critical comment fits into the worlds being made from the texts. That should indicate how our thesis operates against various strains of critical comment. It should also illuminate the way we can make story-worlds appropriate to the works and also how the overflow from the story-worlds contributes to the metaphoric effect.

We make the story-world from the text. There may be many ways of interpreting any given text. But, if we do not make the story-worlds in similar ways we can

not talk about the novel. In the current cases, there do not seem to be many alternative ways of making the story-world. I suspect that, opposed to our findings with the The Turn of the Screw story-worlds, all Pride and Prejudice story-worlds will be similar and so too will be all The Father of her Child story-worlds. If I do not understand that Elizabeth rejected Darcy's first proposal, then I have (certainly) misunderstood the text. How could we discuss it if you understand it to be about intergalactic space travel and I understand it to be about people living in 19th century rural English towns? Neither could we discuss *The Father of her Child*, unless we make the story-world in similar ways. But they do not have to be identical for us to understand. In fact, if we discuss a text, you might point out things that I had overlooked; I might then revise my story-world. We see this occur when we are confronted with a very complex text. *The Divine Comedy*, represents a very complex story-world. It is very difficult to be sure of the geography of hell in detail and much critical comment has been devoted to just this matter.

We notice that the texts (in both cases) present different sorts and amounts of information about different characters. That is how it is. We know a lot about some people and only a little about others. What we know about Mr. Collins, for example, is little and much of that is a caricature. We do not learn to like Mr. Collins from what we are told. But he is the heir presumptive to, what many think, ought by rights to be the inheritance of the Bennet girls. He is, assuredly, an uncouth pig; what we learn about him does not dispose us to like him. This happens in any world. We do not learn much about Lauren's first husband, Wayne, either. And that little does not predispose us to like him.

We also notice that Austen's landscape is richer. It has more characters and situations (but *Pride and Prejudice* is four times the length of *The Father of Her Child*) and, so, is able to provide that richness. We have noted already that it displays many marriages all in different states. But richness is not always desirable; consider the bleak and denuded landscapes of Beckett or of

Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea.* We could, of course, continue to elaborate on the landscapes shown by either novel. That process would take longer and be more detailed with the richer landscape. There is probably little purpose to be gained in such an exercise.

We might liken the making of the story-world to a holiday. We visit a new world (like going to Europe or, maybe a tropical island, or maybe, in the case of Samuel Beckett, some bleak lunar-type land). This is a possibility in either case. To some extent we always do that; we read with greater fixity as we near the climax of most stories. We have noted the claim of Janice Radway that women enjoy the adventure and return to "normal" life refreshed from the romantic, but unrealistic, trip. They know that they are on holiday and do not expect any more than a brief respite. This is certainly a possibility; it comes under the general term "entertainment". The nature of the story-world will, surely, dictate the nature of the escape; it is easy to escape to the The Father of her Child story-world or the Pride and Prejudice story-world, but the Endgame story-world would not seem to offer escapist holidays! And holidays can be of different kinds (from the idle time in the tropics to an exploration of the great art galleries and cathedrals of Europe).

We may see the story-world as like our actual world. We may, then, attempt to see our actual world through the lens of the story-world. We may say that our actual world ought to be like that. This is Daphne Watson's claim. The novels, she says, subvert women by projecting a dream world. They go there often and start to think that their actual world could be like that and should be like that. This may have the effect of making them dissatisfied or of reinforcing "the patriarchal dream". This leads her, as we have seen, to describe the novel (or its genre) as "pernicious". It seems reasonable to suggest that frequent reading of these novels will lead the reader to see her actual world in terms suggested by a plethora of Mills and Boon story-worlds, all very similar. If this can be shown to

be so, we could argue, with Plato, that, indeed, these novels are dishonest.[410] However, that is not agreed by all commentators. Modleski, as we have seen, does not agree, allowing the reader to simply visit the world as an escape. Even if it offers no more, surely there is escape value and simple entertainment value in *Pride and Prejudice* and also in the Mills and Boon publications. The holiday, then, becomes refreshing.

However, it is difficult to read the Austen novel and simply shrug off the implications. A reader might read the novel and consider that Elizabeth and her sisters have been treated unjustly by the legal system. The legal system in the Pride and Prejudice story-world is, of course, the same as that applying in 19th century England. The novel, if read that way, might seem to be a powerful indictment of that system. We may see Elizabeth as showing that her good sense puts her above the horrid Lady Catherine, despite Lady Catherine's superior social position. We may agree that the social arrangements as they affected young women were appalling.

But, we may see it very differently; we may see it as the triumph of the status quo, where the attractive heroine receives society's just reward (a good marriage) for her modesty and conclude that, in such a world, things work out well. We have noted that metaphor can operate at many levels and in a widening circle to show us how our actual world might be. But we read a metaphor against a backgrounds, our own background. We learn from our visit to the story-world. We have previously considered other works as metaphor.

"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife."[411] This is the well known opening sentence of *Pride and Prejudice*. It is difficult to read the novel without taking some notice of this remark. It falls into that category of remark that we earlier called authorial

---

410 Which may not lead us to wish, with Plato, to suppress them.

411 Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, p. 5.

comment. This remark might simply be ignored because, after all, it does not (directly) contribute to the making of the story-world. Yet, we might take it into account as a tongue-in-cheek comment (as I do) or we might take it seriously and use it to support the kind of happy outcome suggested.

This is a case where authorial comment is ambiguous. Consider, however, the authorial comment included in, say, *Aesop's Fables*. If we consider the fable of the "Tortoise and the Hare", my copy[412] has an extended "application" which is the moral. Now, clearly, the moral is the way the fable can be applied, metaphorically, to this world. This is a rather clear case of authorial comment. In a similar, but more complex, vein we could consider the parables of Jesus.

We notice that interpretation at this level turns the story back onto this world and then the manner of its being understood can be varied. This is what Ricoeur tells us to expect. We interpret any metaphor according to our own beliefs and understandings (prejudices). The things they teach us are things that we already (partly) know but which come forward from the story-world making exercise. That is a real lesson, because things are pointed out to us. We saw that Tanner describes *Pride and Prejudice* in terms of recognition and also of performance. We might suggest that, for him, the novel is "about" these ideas. So, here is a metaphoric reference. The Pride and Prejudice story-world can, on this interpretation, be seen as a metaphor for the actual world. Such a metaphor sets off ideas about, *inter alia*, recognition and performance. That is not to limit it to those. The two worlds interact (they must do this to some extent on the above analysis) but here they provide a powerful interaction to set up a metaphoric tension. None of the commentary on the Harlequin novel sets up any similar sort of tension.

---

412 Thomas Bewick, *The Fables of Aesop with Designs on Wood by Thomas Bewick*, London: The Paddington Press, 1975, pp. 221-222.

We can see, from this brief exposition, that the thesis is able to hold up to the critical requirements of a thesis on stories. We get excited, sad, anxious and so on in turn as we make the world and see the various developments that take place there. We are able to relate the story-world to our actual world in detailed and practical ways as well as on a larger, metaphoric, level.

It is tempting to see the kind of world made by a story as, somehow, determining the "value" of that story. Any such consideration would go well beyond the thesis put forward here. If it is possible to compare works for value, such a comparison would need to include factors well beyond the scope of the current thesis. Nevertheless, this thesis may contribute to such an enterprise.

This completes the major part of our work. We can see how stories make sense and we can see why (some of them) are important artefacts and how we can learn from them. In my conclusion, I want to show how this work fits into that wider enterprise broadly known as hermeneutics.

CONCLUSION

The Hermeneutics of Fictional Discourse

There are three things remaining to do in this conclusion. These are: firstly to quickly survey the argument we have been putting; secondly to recognise some other approaches to stories as worldmakers, in particular, that of Roman Ingarden; thirdly, to show the consonance between the work presented here and that broad stream of study called hermeneutics, and the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer, in particular.

To tackle the first of these first. We will remember that our purpose was to put forward a number of ideas that, together, show how a story, fictional or not, can make sense. Our purpose was to make a simple *façon de parler* philosophically respectable. We have done that. We make sense of our world by making an actual world and we make sense of stories by making story-worlds; these activities have certain similarities. We then showed why we react to stories as we do, how we can talk meaningfully about them, why they are worth reading and how they can teach us things. We started this thesis with a consideration of Aristotelian mimesis and moved in an arc to an understanding of Aristotle's claim that metaphor is the crown of linguistic excellence. But we did not finish quite where we began, for our finishing place has moved the discussion to a new level. Metaphor turns out to be no mere ornament to language but a pervasive feature of language and, consequently, of stories. Stories, we discovered, operate

metaphorically to generate new knowledge. That may be important, at least to some readers.

I have argued, with Aristotle, that stories are mimetic. I have argued that mimesis is best understood as representation rather than, as is common, "copy" or "imitation". I have argued that what is represented is a world: the world of the story or, as I call it, a story-world. When we read a story we make a story-world. That is what it is to understand the story.

The emphasis of our argument falls upon the reader and what she does when she reads a story. This thesis has hardly considered the rôle of the author; to do that would require a separate, and different, thesis. The making of story-worlds is a creative activity requiring the reader to do the making from the text. The text, thus, represents the story-world; the reader's task is to read the text and make the story world from that text. Different readers will, thus, discern the story-world in different ways, for no one way is privileged. This leads us to conclude that there are many possible story-worlds which can be made from any text. Even the simplest text will support (slightly) different makings but some texts can support radically different story-worlds. Unless one appeals to something beyond the story-text itself (and, thus, to something which is not the story) there can be no final resolution of such differences. However, a text cannot support just any story-world making; a world made from a text must be consistent with that text.

This is also the case with our experience of our own world. We make an actual world from our experience of the world and it is this actual world, as we make it, in which we live and have the experience from which we, initially, made that actual world in the first place. We do not, of course, live in a story-world. In considering our actual worldmaking activity, I am following Goodman fairly closely; he is also, even though he would disavow it, the inspiration behind the idea of the story-world. I argue that story-worlds and actual worlds are different

things but also, in some critical ways, are similar sorts of things. Further, we make both sorts of worlds by an exercise of the imagination.

This leads directly to our major result. Of course, we can talk about story-worlds and react to events that occur there in ways that are similar to the ways we can talk about our actual world and react to events that take place there, for, as we see, these worlds are not so very different after all.

But Aristotle said that stories are cathartic. We used this claim to argue that mimesis is correctly understood as representation, for we argued that a copy or an imitation could not produce the cathartic effect that Aristotle was seeking. We, therefore, needed to ask how the cathartic result can arise. It is because they teach us things, things that we could not learn in some other way, that stories are such valuable human artefacts; that is why, we argued, Bentham was wrong to write them off. The catharsis operates, I suggested, following Paul Ricoeur, by a metaphoric effect. We traced the lineage of metaphor through a widening circle of meaning which eventually engulfed whole discourses and stories in particular. Metaphors, and also stories, have the property of being true and not-true (for Juliet is not the sun, yet Juliet is, indeed, the sun). Just as a simple metaphor operates between two things (the focus and the frame), so a story sets up a tension between story-worlds and actual worlds. When I read a story, I interpret that story to make a story-world (and, perhaps react to that story-world and talk about it and its denizens and the things that happen there). But I also make my actual world by interpreting my experience. The two worlds so made, sit in a dialectic relationship to each other that is well seen as metaphoric. Each feeds on the other.

When we read a story, we may draw comparisons, in detail or in broad terms, between the story-world and our actual world. We may come to see our actual world in ways derived from the story. We may just use the story-world as an escape from our actual world but, I suggest, we often come to see each sort of world in terms that characterise the other. And in the case of a powerful

metaphor, we learn from our reading. Our actual world is utterly unlike the King Lear story-world, yet our actual world is curiously like that world in so many ways, that we learn about our actual world from our experience of the King Lear story-world. We learn, as we have seen, for example, about familial love and its displacements and about the deprivations of mortality from *King Lear*. Thus, we see a way in which stories and worlds interact to create meaning. This is our second major conclusion. This brings us back to Aristotle's catharsis. Stories turn out to be simple and simply understood but, at the same time, may be powerful. The catharsis can operate at many levels, as Aristotle seems to have allowed. The catharsis may be refreshment and escape or we may learn from our (cathartic) experience of the story-world.

This implies that any story will, or can, operate in this metaphorical way. This thesis does not claim that every story does, in fact, so operate at every reading. We read stories for reasons other than intellectual catharsis and we, almost certainly, choose stories to suit our moods and inclinations at the time. Few of us could live with a diet consisting of only "great" tragedies but most of us desire something to "bite into" at least on occasion. Of course, following Aristotle, there is no claim that all stories are equally powerful as metaphors.

My claim for this thesis is that it explains the phenomena under investigation. I have argued that the most we can ask of any theory is that it cohere and that it does, in fact, answer the problems it sets out to solve. In this case, these problems are the problem of our reactions to stories and the problem of how we are able to talk meaningfully about stories; there is the further problem of how such things can have any value or any ability to teach us. We can see that the thesis addresses these questions successfully. There will always be competing possibilities and, therefore, other answers given to solve the same set of problems; this follows from the thesis itself. The justification for the approach to stories argued here, has been that this approach is simple and elegant and that it does answer the questions it set

out to answer. Further, the answers provided conform to our commonsense expectations. It is these qualities that constitute this theory's claims to acceptance.

This thesis does not explore questions of interpretation of other art forms, such as painting.[413] It is fairly clear what path might be taken to develop such a theory, but, in this thesis, the temptation to take that path has been, largely, avoided. It is also clear that the thesis opens up a path for exploring questions of value in stories. Again we have, perhaps without complete success, avoided going there.

Of course, this is not the only study which has developed a theory of stories as world makers. The second thing that we must do in this conclusion is to point towards some other work in this area. Nicholas Wolterstorff talks of literary works as worldmakers. Wolterstorff describes worldmaking as an action on the part of the creator; in the case of a story that worldmaker is the author, of the work. Mimesis, he argues, is a particular kind of speech act,[414] a speech act of worldmaking on the part of the author. In saying this, he falls into the tradition established by Austin and Searle, rather than that of Goodman, for writing is a speech act. This debt he freely acknowledges.[415] He tells us that "[b]y inscribing words on paper ... Gogol performed the action of fictionally projecting a world. Likewise, by applying paint to canvas and thus creating his *Birth of Venus* Botticelli performed the action of fictionally projecting a world."[416] Much of what Wolterstorff says is quite compatible with our present thesis. The speech act of the author is one of world "projection". For us, the act of writing or saying the story is one of representing the projected world, where for Wolterstorff it is a

---

413 Although it does use paintings as examples to progress the argument.

414 We have noted earlier in this study, other writers, Gregory Currie for example, who have described story making in terms of speech act theory. For us, mimesis is a form of representation. Our thesis and his need not be incompatible (one relates to what authors do, the other to what readers do).

415 Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Works and Worlds of Art*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980, p. 200.

416 Ibid., p202.

mimetic act of world projection. It is already clear that Wolterstorff's focus is on the author; this focus is not ours. Further Wolterstorff seems to be unconcerned with the creative act of the reader; worldmaking acts are, for him, authorial acts. "Walton's [and Goodman's] theory", he argues, "grounds picturing in what beholders do. Mine grounds picturing in what artists do."[417] Wolterstorrf's approach would seem to privilege the intention of the author against that of the reader, for the object of artistic endeavour seems to be an intentional object in the mind of the author. We do not do that. We have earlier discussed this aspect of the problem.

A writer more in tune with the thesis argued here is the Polish phenomenologist, Roman Ingarden. Ingarden was concerned with the phenomenology of literary works and the way they are understood, rather than with explicating a method to be employed to come to that understanding. We will find a great deal of common ground between Ingarden's phenomenology and the conclusions of this thesis. In fact, this commonality, when the method of study is as different as his and ours have been, adds further weight to the conclusions we have drawn. For Ingarden, to read a story is to project a world.

In addition to essays, Ingarden produced two major works: *The Literary Work of Art* and *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art,* on this aspect of philosophy. In the first he describes what a literary work of art is, and in the second he is concerned with what the reader does when he or she reads (cognises) that work. Ingarden talks of a text, but here, as previously, we can treat a story as a text; Ingarden's claims have obvious correlates with a story, which is spoken, and he says as much.[418] Further, Ingarden's project is wider than ours, for his theory

---

417 Ibid., p317.

418 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art,* p. 12.

attempts to account for any work,[419] while we have restricted our discussion to stories. He is also concerned with questions of aesthetics, questions which we have largely ignored. I will very briefly summarise the claims that Ingarden makes that are most relevant to our thesis (the rest of his work, we must ignore). We will see almost immediately the similarities we wish to note.

Ingarden, as do we, consistently describes a work as representing.[420] He argues that works create worlds and, from this, he comes to conclusions similar to some of ours. For example, he argues that historical personages such as appear in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (his example) or *War and Peace* (our example) are not representations of the historical personages, Julius Caesar or Napoleon.[421] The characters in novels and plays are "foregrounded" and the original (historical) personage is, therefore, in the background. He says that this kind of representation can never achieve complete "concealment" of the original character.[422] This thesis has suggested that what the reader knows about the original (historical) personage infuses his or her making of the character in the story-world.

However, Ingarden's basic claim is that, in understanding a story, the reader "projects" a world. But, before we can do that we must read the story. For Ingarden, a literary work is "polyphonic";[423] by this he means that the work is a "many layered formation"[424] consisting of a number of significant strata. Reading, thus, is an activity, which must deal with these strata. At the first level, there is

---

419 Roman Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art* (transl. Ruth Ann Crowley and Kenneth R. Olson), Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973, pp. 6-7.

420 For example, Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, p. 181.

421 Ibid., p. 245.

422 Ibid.

423 Ibid., p. 35.

424 Ibid., p. 12.

the text itself. This is the level of the "ink spots",[425] in the case of a written text, and the sounds of the words, for a spoken text. It is at this level that we must make out the words. For a well-printed text this is usually easy. For some texts (poorly written or faded) this may be very difficult.[426] Some texts distract us at this level by the use of poetic devices such as rhythm and rhyme. Those texts draw attention to the marks on the page and the sound of the words. We have noted this sort of distraction in our discussion of *Willie Master's Lonesome Wife*. Such an observation does not, of course, denigrate this level, or works which operate primarily at this level; it is, after all, the very stuff of much poetry.[427]

At the second level, we have the "meaning" of the words, sentences and, ultimately, the work itself. This is the semantic level. The sounds of the first level build up to create units with meaning, for, generally, a single sound on its own, has no meaning. Sounds build into words and words into meaningful sentences. Individual words and sentences "reach out" to other words and sentences to construct larger and larger units of meaning.[428] However, in a literary work, as opposed to, say, a scientific work, the sentences do not represent genuine judgments; they are, says Ingarden, quasi-judgments. This confers a very different status on scientific works as opposed to literary works.[429] This is, partly, I think, how Ingarden sees a "work of art". It is constituted from quasi-judgments. He says that questions asked by characters in novels are quasi-questions and so forth.[430]

---

425 Gerald Nyenhuis, "Roman Ingarden's Contribution to the Reading and Analysis of the Literary Text", in Hans H. Rudnick (ed.), *Ingardeniana II,* Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990, p. 95.

426 I owe this point to Livio Dobrez.

427 And, in a different context, abstract art.

428 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, p. 148-9.

429 Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, pp. 146-167.

430 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, p. 181.

Further, Ingarden tells us that "real" personages are determined in every respect, where this is not so of characters in a written work.[431] "Real" personages, and objects, exist independently and, conceptually, any question about them is answerable. Most commentators take this to be so. However, in this thesis, we have concentrated on the reader's relationship with fictional characters and likened that relationship to the reader's relationship with actual world personages. I have argued that, even if actual world personages are completely determined, as Ingarden claims, our knowledge of such personages, as our knowledge of the characters in a story-world, is only ever partial and can only ever be partial; it can never, in practice, be completely determined. Ingarden would agree with that claim. The difference between us arises, at least to some extent, from the different perspectives we are bringing to the question. Nevertheless, it is differences such as these that lead Ingarden to describe judgments about characters in stories as quasi-judgments,[432] a description we have rejected. The thesis put here explains how reactions to stories and judgments within and about characters in stories are genuine; a position which better accords with our common understanding.

In a later essay, Ingarden offers a further treatment of judgments which appear in a story.[433] He argues that we may analyse any judgment from two different points of view: we can consider (many) judgments as being contained within the story. These are pseudo-judgments. Other judgments may be drawn by the author as relating in a more general fashion.[434] Such judgments are either right or wrong in the same way as they would be in any "normal" discourse. This treatment is completely consistent with the argument put in this thesis, which is to say that when a story is not treated as a story, but as something else, our story-world

---

431 Ibid., p. 246.

432 Ibid., p. 181-2.

433 Roman Ingarden, "On So-Called Truth in Literature", in Peter J. McCormick, *Selected Papers in Aesthetics*, 1985, pp. 133-162.

434 He has in mind such claims as that which, famously, opens *Anna Karenina.*

making thesis does not apply. Nevertheless, Ingarden still argues that the statements in a story are to be contrasted with the statements in, say a scientific treatise; this is, as I have said, a view which we have rejected.

Ingarden attempts to enlist Aristotle's support for his view.[435] Aristotle, in *The Poetics*, says that it is not the form, but the content, which differentiates science from poetry.[436] It follows, says Ingarden, that Aristotle would agree that there is a gulf between the two forms. But we have argued that they are different, not on the basis of a linguistic gulf (for Aristotle does, in this passage, agree that science can be cast in verse form), but on the basis of the world under consideration. There seems to be no reason to accept that Aristotle would, inevitably, side with Ingarden and his pseudo-judgments against the worldmaking thesis as argued in this thesis.

At the third level, Ingarden talks about "manifold schematized aspects and aspect continua" and at the fourth level he talks of "represented objectivities and their vicissitudes".[437] The fourth level is the world represented by the text. That world is made up from the objectivities identified at the third level. These objectivities are subjected to the vicissitudes of the plot to project a world. The objectivities are objects as represented by the text.

According to Ingarden, an object is a determinate thing. That object is represented by the text under some aspect; it is, then, no longer determinate and is, what he is calling an objectivity. A vase of sunflowers is a determinate object. However, when painted by Van Gogh (*Sunflowers*, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam), the vase of sunflowers in the painting (as opposed to the painting itself) is schematised and is, as a schematised object, not determinate, for the painting

---

435 Roman Ingarden, "A Marginal Commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics*," in Peter J. McCormick, *Selected Papers in Aesthetics*, 1985, p. 59.

436 Aristotle, *The Poetics*, 1447b.

437 Ingarden, *The Literary Work of Art*, p. 30.

represents the sunflowers in a particular manner. Any representation must do this. Such things and events as Netherfield Park, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth's dinner at Rosings and so forth are objects but are presented to us by the text in a certain manner; in this sense, they are objectivities. For example, Mr. Collins is presented in a certain manner; the way he is presented to us is the way the author has schematised that particular object. Objectivities have some abiding sense in terms of the work and, so are not fixed but may change (as a person develops) in that world. Objectivities are subjected to the vicissitudes of plot and, thus, schematised (by the author) under some sort of aspect to bring about movement in the plot. The distinction between Ingarden's levels is not one this thesis has drawn, but is one that is in sympathy with the discussion we have followed. It certainly does no violence to the thesis put here. We have, of course, integrated the concept of time and events as occurring in the time-frame of the story-world, into our very definition of what a story is.

No text can say everything that might be said about the characters or events in the story-world. For, however much detail was provided, more would be needed to cover any possible question. As we have noted, we are not told how many children Lady Macbeth had, but if we were told that, there would be other questions (their relative ages, how well they fed and so forth) that we would not be told. To tell everything would require an infinite text. We must, therefore, said Ingarden, "concretise"[438] the work if it is to be (or become) a story, or (to use Ingarden's term) a literary work of art. The work contains "potentiality"[439] which is, thus, realised when the work is read. Further, we all concretise a work differently. That will be, partly, a result of our own lives and times. This concretisation brings the text into a meaningful whole rather than leaving it as merely a series of disparate meanings.[440] Reading is thus, or should be, an active

---

438 Ibid., p. 332.

439 Ibid., p. 341.

440 Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, p. 35.

task.[441] Ingarden's concretisation is our story-world making. For Ingarden, as for our thesis, the text awaits the reader to concretise it. Story-world making is an certainly active task and can be a difficult one.

There are many other aspects of art works that we have glossed over, which are of interest to Ingarden. Ingarden is very interested in the ontology of artworks, where this thesis has, apart from a brief discussion of the ontological status of story-worlds, largely ignored ontological issues surrounding artworks themselves. As we have already noted, Ingarden argues that the artwork is an intentional object rather than being coterminous with its physical realisation. He makes this claim for all artworks, including architectural works.[442] This thesis has considered stories rather than some general category of "artwork". Yet our findings are not unsympathetic to findings such as Ingarden's (at least for stories), for the story-world is made by the reader from the text. This is true of Ingarden's concretisation. This thesis, while using, as examples, other "art" forms, has not attempted a broad theory and certainly not a general theory of art or aesthetics.

To summarise Ingarden's approach. A text is polyphonic, consisting of different levels at which it must be read. At the first level, we read the marks on the page; at the second, we attribute meaning to words and groups of words so that, at the third level, we can project objectivities which we then, by the process of concretisation, build into projected worlds (story-worlds). Although, we have found important areas of difference between Ingarden's philosophy and our findings, we see, in this short statement, a remarkable consonance of results.

The final task of this conclusion is to show how the thesis put here merges into that broad stream of philosophising about the interpreting of literary texts, known

---

441 Ibid., p. 37-41.

442 Anita Szczepańska, "The Structure of Artworks", in Bohdan Dziemidok, and Peter McCormick, *On the Aesthetics of Roman Ingarden: Interpretations and Assessments*, 1989, pp. 27-8 discusses this issue. I owe this point to this article.

as hermeneutics. The hermeneutic field is a vast area of work. Our discussion with Paul Ricoeur on metaphor, has already opened up the hermeneutic approach to texts. In what remains of this conclusion, it is impossible to do any more than point towards some important thinking in this field, thinking that intersects with the approach outlined here. To do this, we will very briefly survey some thinkers in the field but concentrate our attention on the important work of Hans-Georg Gadamer.

The hermeneutic tradition stretches back to Augustine, who frankly acknowledged the difficulty of interpreting that, to him, most important of all works: The Bible, Holy Scripture. "I struggle hard to understand it", he tells us.[443] A correct interpretation of those writings was, to Augustine, most important. Augustine continues by looking to God for interpretive help. Alas, many of us feel that we will not receive interpretive assistance from that source and we will have to rely on human help for the enterprise. Hermeneutics may have begun its life with the question of biblical interpretation, but it has broadened its concerns, firstly, to the understanding of the texts of classical antiquity and, more recently, to the question of understanding any text. The traditional objective of hermeneutics was to propose a method for coming to a (correct) understanding of a text. We have not taken that course and this thesis has proposed no particular method. In fact, we have argued that there can be no single correct interpretation, in this we agree with modern hermeneuticists such as Ricoeur and Gadamer.

Schleiermacher is credited with being the first to introduce a general theory of hermeneutics. "Hermeneutics", he said, "does not apply exclusively to classical studies, ... it is to be applied to the works of every author."[444] In fact, Schleiermacher argues that interpretation is an activity required for any

---

443 Augustine, *Confessions* (transl. R. S. Pine-Coffin), Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975, p. 281.

communication task. Even at the market place, we need to interpret. But this is easy for we know "almost immediately and with certainty what the other [person] will respond, and language is tossed back and forth as a ball."[445] This may be a simple hermeneutic task but, it is an hermeneutic task nevertheless.

For Schleiermacher, essentially, we interpret a text by getting into the mind of the author of that text. "In interpretation it is essential", he says, "that one be able to step out of one's own frame of mind into that of the author."[446] This is no easy task. In fact Schleiermacher frequently commented that it is difficult, so difficult and time consuming that "understanding [a text] is an unending task."[447] Furthermore, commentaries and other writings cannot solve this difficulty for us for they must, themselves, be interpreted.[448] This is a point that we made earlier and many of Schleiermacher's claims are quite in line with the claims made in this thesis.

However, Schleiermacher, like Hirsch more recently, argued that "meaning" is an intentional object in its author's mind. It is this towards which the hermeneutical task is oriented. Schleiermacher observes that we are not free to choose any "kind of interpretation".[449] In the same place, he says that hermeneutics needs to become a "systematic, self-contained discipline"[450] in order to avoid the "problem" of random interpretation. While agreeing that a text may not be understood in just any fashion, we have consistently argued that understanding

---

444 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts* (ed. Heinze Kimmerle, transl. James Duke and Jack Forstman), Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977, p. 180.

445 Ibid., p. 175.

446 Ibid., p. 42.

447 Ibid., p. 41; see also, for example, p. 77, p. 95.

448 Ibid., p. 109.

449 Ibid., p. 214.

450 Ibid.

need not be oriented towards some sort of authorial intention. That is not to say that the historical method is completely without merit. In fact, such an approach to, say, The Bible, has, in recent times, yielded great dividends in understanding that work. But, then, modern biblical scholarship does not treat The Bible as a story, but, rather, as a text for study.

Dilthey saw Schleiermacher's hermeneutics as "masterful",[451] yet even he observes that Schleiermacher's method analyses understanding as "a re-experiencing or reconstruction in its vital relationship ... [of] the process of literary production".[452] In other words, Schleiermacher's method restricts how we can approach a work of literature. We have also made that point. If a story is to remain fresh and alive for readers today, it is because reading (and writing) are creative activities and meaning is made, and made ever fresh and new, rather than being simply recovered.

This was something that Gadamer clearly saw. We are never able to fully carry out Schleiermacher's interpretive project. We can never recreate the author's intention for we are, Gadamer argued, radically historically positioned and it is never possible to attain to the mindset of the author of a work. Gadamer also argued that this is not even desirable; to do so would be of no value for "a hermeneutics that regarded understanding as reconstructing the original would be ... dead."[453] We have an encounter with a work in time and our historical circumstances condition the nature of that encounter. Were it not so, the encounter would be worthless, a mere throwback to some other historical time. We must understand any text in our own way as a "productive", rather than a

---

451 Wilhelm Dilthey, "The Rise of Hermeneutics", in Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift, *The Hermeneutic Tradition: From Ast to Ricoeur*, 1990, p. 113.

452 Ibid., p. 110.

453 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 167.

merely "reproductive" activity.[454] The alternative, Gadamer claims, is not to "understand at all."[455]

Even our brief discussion above shows that Schleiermacher was not as confident in the achievement of his goal as is often supposed. For Schleiermacher, the goal of hermeneutics was to arrive at a correct understanding of a text. A correct understanding of a text is a knowledge of the intentional object of the author of the text. That may require a great deal of reconstruction of the times and circumstances of the creation of the work for the reader. Thus, for the Scriptures, this approach would allow the student to get ever closer to a true understanding of the meaning of the text, where the meaning just is that intentional object; we would need to undertake (exhaustive) historical and other related studies, to move close to achieving such an objective. But Schleiermacher doubted that his objective could ever be fully achieved, at least with a text as complex as The Bible. He accepted that one could get close, ever closer, but seemed to think that a full achievement of the goal would be impossible. This thesis concurs with that conclusion. I am not arguing that there is no value in textual and historical studies such as Schleiermacher seems to be advocating. Of course, there is. However, we have argued in this thesis that interpretation of a story-text must be conducted on the basis of that text, *qua* story. Taking other material into account is to interpret something wider than (just the text in question); the question of the author's meaning (if there was one) is a different question from question the meaning of the work itself. Of course, historical and related studies can be of great value — that is not being questioned. But this thesis agrees with Gadamer; an interpretation, if it is to be of relevance to a living interpreter, must be alive, it must be an interpretation that is not merely a reconstruction.

It might well be suggested that the thesis advanced in this dissertation is the obverse of the coin of Gadamer's thesis, for there is much general ground that is

---

454 Ibid., p. 296.

common to both approaches, even if the manner of their discussion and definition are very different. In the few words left, I wish to point to some reasons why such a claim merits serious consideration. Our purpose is not to merely point to the many places where there is a sympathetic concurrence of thinking; to do that would be tedious. We want to select the major themes running through Gadamer's work and this thesis, to illustrate this claim.

Gadamer's major argument is that we are beings in an historical situation and that we cannot escape that situation (as if we would wish to) and go back to the situation of the author of a work as Schleiermacher said we should. As historically situated beings, we must interpret any work from within our own historical situation. There can be "no understanding that is free of all prejudice."[456] Gadamer talks of our situation as tradition. If we were not embedded in some such tradition, we could never make sense of anything, for "belonging to a tradition is a condition of hermeneutics".[457] Gadamer also says that the tradition in which we live is "essentially verbal in character";[458] that is to say it is symbolised. Gadamer, therefore, as do we, rejects the notion that there can be one correct interpretation, namely, that intended by the author of a work. Any interpretation must be contemporary and relevant and arise from the circumstances of the interpreter (his actual world).

Gadamer then argues that a work poses a question and that any form of understanding must be in response to some question that we ourselves pose. In fact, he argues, that this is the essence of understanding.[459] There is, he says, always a question at the root of any knowledge or judgment. By this, I take it that he is saying that, to know or believe anything, there must be a subject matter about

---

455 Ibid., p. 297.

456 Ibid., p. 490.

457 Ibid., p. 291.

458 Ibid., p. 389.

which that knowledge or belief is held. That subject matter implies a "question"; elsewhere he calls this the horizon of the work.

Gadamer says that we also have a horizon. We encounter any work from within our own horizon. Our horizon is, he tells us, "the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point."[460] But our horizon is "continually in the process of being formed."[461] As we live and have experiences, so we test our understanding of the world; this understanding is our horizon. As we make our actual world we are forming, reforming, and extending our own horizon (which is essentially the vantage point from which we see the world, that is to say, it is how we see the world). We have noted that we experience a work from our world. When we understand a work, the work and its horizon comes together with our horizon and, so, our horizon extends.[462] Gadamer talks of the fusion of horizons.

Interpretation is, thus, an encounter of horizons within a wider and widening horizon. Our historical situation (our tradition) sets a (general) horizon within which we operate. Gadamer tells us that our horizon is the breadth of our understanding and that, as we advance, our horizon constantly expands. It is, I take it, implicit within his philosophy, that the expansion and advance of our horizon is a worthwhile thing. Gadamer talks of works as having a horizon also. He talks of our participation in the work as a joining of our horizon with that of the work (a fusion of horizons) and that leads to our knowing new things; things the author may not have known. This implies that the author's horizon is not simply added to ours but something new is created from the fusion. Since our

---

459 Ibid., p. 362, 370.

460 Ibid., p. 302.

461 Ibid., p. 306.

462 Ibid.

horizon is not that of the author, what we learn may be something that he could not teach directly. This seems to be implicit in what Gadamer tells us.[463]

A horizon is, he says, "the range of vision." [464] He then observes, in the same passage, that a horizon can "expand" and we can "open up new horizons".[465] He earlier tells us that a "horizon is not a rigid boundary but something that moves with one and invites one to advance further."[466] Gadamer uses the concept of horizon because, he says, "it expresses the superior breadth of vision".[467] Gadamer, thus, talks of the horizon in positive terms. It is Gadamer's metaphor for our vision or view of the world and this is how he describes the process outlined above. Our horizon, at any given time, is not a new view (as if we suddenly opened our eyes and saw the horizon spread out). It is a result of our historical circumstances and our experience. As our experience expands our horizon expands, a result of our past and a fusion of the horizon of the past with our new experience. Our past horizon is a result of our collective past or our tradition.

When I answer the question posed by the text, then my horizon fuses with that of the text (but not necessarily with that of the author of the text). This fusion can only come about by pursuing the question posed by the text. We ask, for ourselves, the question that the text is posing. We must answer that question, even if we do so from the text. In answering the question, the question (and answer) become our question and our answer. Thus, Gadamer says, we expand our horizon towards the horizon posed by the text in answering its question.

---

463 This also follows from our discussion of metaphor.

464 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 302.

465 Ibid.

466 Ibid., p. 245.

467 Ibid., p. 305.

It is doubtful that any of us can ever exhaust a text (and certainly not a text as great as, say, *King Lear*) and, I would argue that Gadamer's fusion could never, in fact, be complete (for the text will always have something new to teach us). Gadamer might agree. In a similar fashion we can never exhaust Schleiermacher's project. This is simply to say that some texts can withstand a significant and continuing encounter (or study) without being exhausted thereby. That should not surprise anybody.

As we have said, although each of us operates with a horizon of our own, that horizon is not completely of our own making. It is, partly at least, conditioned by our (shared) historical and cultural circumstances. We are heirs to the tradition of our forefathers. We have considered actual worlds and their making; we have also recognised that actual worlds are, at least in part, conditioned by our cultural and historical circumstances and that they are modified as a result of reading and similar encounters with stories and other works of art. That is how, for Gadamer, reading functions as a worthwhile, human activity.

Not that Gadamer was prepared to go as far as saying that a work can mean just anything we want it to; it cannot. He locates meaning within the tradition,[468] for, as we have said, we cannot escape our historical circumstances; these are the tradition from which we operate. "I must", he says, "allow tradition's claim to validity ... in such a way that it has something to say to me."[469] If it were not so, Gadamer suggests that meaning would be ungrounded. Tradition maintains a "continuity of meaning".[470] In this, Gadamer has been accused of conservatism.[471] This may be a fair criticism, for Gadamer accords a high standing to tradition as a

---

468 Ibid., p. 358.

469 Ibid., p. 361.

470 Ibid., p. 134.

471 Georgia Warnke, for example, suggests that this is Habermas' argument. See Georgia Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason,* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987, pp. 134-138.

tool for the hermeneutist. Even in conceding that sometimes we overturn tradition, he argues that such an overturning is, itself, a response to the very tradition being overturned. "Alteration of the existing conditions is", he says, "no less a form of connection to tradition than is a defence of existing conditions."[472] To translate into the terms we have been using, the tradition is our actual world. In large measure, we inherit our actual world from our predecessors. I have already argued that the training we receive when we are young is importantly formative in our own actual world making.

As we come to grips with a work, our horizon is extended and it will eventually fuse with the horizon of the work. Thus, he says, our encounter with a work is a life changing experience. Such (metaphoric) talk is quite consistent with the claims put forward in this thesis. But the questions of the rôle of tradition and the possible extent of the fusion of horizons are questions we need not resolve now. Obviously, we are historically positioned; that historical position arises from our personal and cultural circumstances and, in turn, will strongly influence our understanding of a text. Consider our earlier discussion of *The Turn of the Screw*. Even from within a particular culture and tradition, different people are still led to differing constructions of the story-world and, thus, to very different understandings of the text. We can recognise this much without arguing the case for or against Gadamer. We simply note that his position is closer to the position that we have developed, at least in this respect, than is the position of Schleiermacher.

Further, Gadamer says that "hermeneutic experience is verbal in nature."[473] We certainly accept that claim (or one even stronger), but we would prefer to say that hermeneutic understanding is symbolic in nature. We have gone further and

---

472 Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Reply to My Critics", in Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift, *The Hermeneutic Tradition: From Ast to Ricoeur*, 1990, p. 288.

473 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 443.

suggested that all understanding is hermeneutic. We must always interpret. Gadamer suggests as much, when he discusses language as the bearer of concepts.[474]

So, for Gadamer and his hermeneutic, as with us, a text operates within a dialectical or tension with our (human) circumstances which can only be described as metaphorical. For Gadamer, as for Aristotle and us, our encounter with a story operates metaphorically, to produce an intellectual catharsis.

For Gadamer, we are always interpreting and must always interpret. Our total experience requires interpretation. This is a theme that has strongly emerged within this thesis. The making of actual worlds is a form of interpretation. Gadamer discusses translation[475] as a form of interpretation leading to the resaying of something in another language. But that resaying must be an interpretation rather than some sort of pure translation for the resaying of a text amounts to an interpretation of that text. We agree and have argued in a similar vein in our second chapter. Consequently, Gadamer has been accused of relativism (as if that were a crime). It seems difficult to argue that Gadamer's interpretive scheme is a sort of relativism. Bilen argues that there is a significant difference in the position that our understanding is relative (to our historical circumstances) and the position that the world itself is relative.[476] He suggests that Gadamer holds the first position but not the second. We can accept either position.

For Gadamer, a text is not an aesthetic object to be "appreciated" from a distance. He talks about standing back, he describes the person who "merely gapes at

---

474 Ibid., pp. 383-491.

475 Ibid., pp. 384-89.

476 Osman Bilen, *The Historicity of Understanding and The Problem of Relativism in Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics*, Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000.

something."[477] Such a person is not entering into the world of the work (or object) but is charmed by it and curious about it. For Gadamer, one must become immersed in the work; the work must become contemporaneous[478] with the interpreter, but not vice versa, and, thus, of immediate concern to the reader. That is to visit the story-world and to become emotionally involved with the lives of those who live there. That is a major theme of this thesis. We can see the importance, to modern hermeneutics, of story. This is an importance echoed by this thesis. To make one final, irresistible, observation: Gadamer, perhaps following Ingarden, talks of interpretation as the "concretion of meaning itself."[479]

Thus, we can see, from just this brief discussion, a continuum in the work of Gadamer and our results. We have moved from a consideration of the nature of mimesis, as a representation through an explanation of the nature of the represented. That discussion has shown how stories make sense and explains many of the difficulties traditionally associated with them. We then considered the idea of metaphor as a way of extending our findings to give stories a way of telling us things, showing us new truth. That demonstrated the power of many of Aristotle's claims for tragedy.

Now, finally, we have seen how the findings of this thesis support, and are supported by, recent developments in hermeneutics, thereby, showing that the thesis put forward in this dissertation, is itself a contribution to the hermeneutic method.

---

477 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 126.

478 Ibid., p. 127.

479 Ibid., p. 397.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Part 1 Critical Works

Following is a list of sources used in the development of this thesis.

Acheson, James. "Chess with the Audience: Samuel Beckett's Endgame". In Patrick A. McCarthy, *Critical Essays on Samuel Beckett*, 1986, pp. 181-192.

Aristotle. *The Art of Rhetoric* (transl. H. C. Lawson-Tancred). London: Penguin Books, 1991.

_____. *Metaphysics* (transl. Hugh Lawson-Tancred). London: Penguin Books, London, 1998.

_____. *Poetics* (transl. Malcolm Heath). London: Penguin Books, 1996.

Armour-Garb, Bradley and Beal J. C. "Minimalism and the Dialethic Challenge". *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 81, (2003), pp. 383-401.

Ashley, Bob. *The Study of Popular Fiction: A Source Book.* London: Pinter Publishers, 1989.

Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (transl. Willard R Trask). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953.

Augustine. *Confessions* (transl. R. S. Pine-Coffin). Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975.

Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice* (ed. Vivien Jones). London: Penguin Books, 1996.

Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author". In *Image Music Text*, pp. 142-148.

_____. "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein". In *Image Music Text*, pp. 69-78.

_____. *Image, Music, Text.* (selected and transl. Stephen Heath). New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.

_____. "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives". In *Image, Music, Text*, pp. 79-124.

_____. *S/Z* (transl. Richard Miller). London: Jonathan Cape, 1975.

Bataille, Georges. *Le Bleu du Ciel.* Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1963.

Beardsley, Monroe C. "The Metaphorical Twist". In *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research,* XXII, (1962), pp. 293-307.

Beckett, Samuel. *Endgame.* London: Faber and Faber, 1964.

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations* (transl. Harry Zohn). New York: Schoken Books, 1969.

Bewick, Thomas. *The Fables of Aesop with Designs on Wood by Thomas Bewick.* London: The Paddington Press, 1975.

Bickhard, Mark H. "How Does the Environment Affect the Person?" In L. T. Winegar and J. Valsiner (eds) *Children's Development within Social Contexts: Metatheoretical, Theoretical and Methodological Issues*, 1992, pp. 63-92.

Bilen, Osman. *The Historicity of Understanding and The Problem of Relativism in Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics.* Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000.

Black, Max. "How Metaphors Work: A Reply to Donald Davidson". In Sheldon Sacks, *On Metaphor*, 1979, pp. 181-192.

_____. *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962.

_____. "More About Metaphor". In Andrew Ortony, *Metaphor and Thought*, 1993, pp. 19-41.

Blackburn, Simon. *Spreading the Word: Groundings in the Philosophy of Language.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Bloom, Harold. *Shakespeare: the Invention of the Human.* London: Fourth Estate, 1999.

Breazeale, Daniel (ed. and transl.). *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the early 1879's.* Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1979.

Brook, Andrew. *Kant and the Mind.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Brown, Julia Prewitt. *Jane Austen's Novels: Social Change and Literary Form.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979.

Brown, Lloyd W. "The Business of Marrying and Mothering". In Juliet McMaster, *Jane Austen's Achievement*, 1979, pp. 27-43.

Butcher, S. H. *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art with a Critical Text and Translation.* London: MacMillan, 1895.

Carroll, John. *Humanism: The Wreck of Western Culture.* London: Fontana Press, 1993.

_____. *The Western Dreaming: The Western World is Dying for Want of a Story.* Sydney: Harper Collins, 2001.

Carroll, Noël. "Art, Intention, and Conversation". In Gary Iseminger, *Intention and Interpretation*, 1992, pp. 97-131.

_____. "Enjoying Horror Fictions: A Reply to Gaut". In *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 35, (1995), pp. 67-72.

_____. "Interpretation and Intention: The Debate between Hypothetical and Actual Intentionalism". In *Metaphilosophy*, 31 (2000), pp. 75-95.

_____. *The Philosophy of Horror.* New York: Routledge, 1990.

Cassirer, Ernst. *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1951.

_____. *Language and Myth* (transl. Susanne K. Langer). New York: Dover, 1946.

Cavell, Stanley. *Must we Mean What we Say? A Book of Essays.* London: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Cawelti, John G. *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1976.

Chisholm, Roderick M. "Identity through Possible Worlds: Some Questions". In Michael J. Loux, *The Possible and the Actual*, 1979, pp. 80-87.

Coe, Richard. "Molloy". In Patrick A. McCarthy, *Critical Essays on Samuel Beckett*, 1986, pp. 82-87.

Cohn, Ruby. *Samuel Beckett: The Comic Gamut.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1962.

Collingwood, R. G. *The Principles of Art.* London: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Coleman, Francis X. J. *The Harmony of Reason: A Study in Kant's Aesthetics.* Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974.

Cook, Jon. "Fictional Fathers". In Susannah Radstone, *Sweet Dreams*, 1988, pp. 137-164.

Cranfill, Thomas Mabry and Clark, Robert Lanier Jr. *An Anatomy of The Turn of the Screw.* Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1965.

Crittenden, Charles. *Unreality: the Metaphysics of Fictional Objects.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991.

Croce, Benedetto. *Guide to Aesthetics* (transl. Patrick Romanell). Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

Currie, Gregory. *The Nature of Fiction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

_____. *An Ontology of Art.* London: Macmillan Press, 1989.

Currie, Gregory and Ravenscroft, Ian. *Recreative Minds: Imagination in Philosophy and Psychology.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Danto, Arthur C. *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art.* Cambridge, MA: Harvarrd University Press, 1981.

Darcy, Emma. *The Father of her Child.* Sydney: Harlequin Mills and Boon, 1996.

Davidson, Donald. *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.

_____. "What Metaphors Mean". In *Critical Inquiry*, 5, (1978), pp. 31-47.

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix. A *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (transl. Brian Massumi). London: Athlone Press, 1988.

Delle Site, Nadia. "The Aesthetic Theory of Ingarden and Its Philosophical Implications". In Hans H. Rudnick (ed.), *Ingardeniana II,* Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990, pp. 71-84.

de Saussure, Ferdinand. *Course in General Linguistics* (ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye with Albert Riedlinger, transl. Wade Baskin). New York, McGraw-Hill, 1966.

_____. *Third Course of Lectures on General Linguistics (1910-1911) from the Notebooks of Emile Constantin* (ed. Eisuke Komatsu, transl. Roy Harris). Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1993.

Devitt, Michael and Sterelny, Kim. *Language and Reality: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Language* 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999.

Dewey, John. *Art as Experience.* New York: Perigree Books, 1980.

Dickie, George and Wilson, Kent. "The Intentional Fallacy: Defending Beardsley". In *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 53, (1995), pp. 233-250.

Dilthey, Wilhelm. "The Rise of Hermeneutics". In Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift, *The Hermeneutic Tradition: From Ast to Ricoeur*, 1990, pp. 101-114.

Dorsch, T. S. *Classical Literary Criticism*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965.

Douglas, Mary and Hull, David. *How Classification Works: Nelson Goodman among the Social Sciences*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992.

Dudman, V. H. "Grammar, Semantics and Conditionals". In *Analysis*, 50, (1990), pp. 214-224.

Dziemidok, Bohdan and McCormick, Peter. *On the Aesthetics of Roman Ingarden: Interpretations and Assessments*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1989.

Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983.

Eliot, T. S. *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*. London: Methuen, 1960.

Feyerabend, Paul. *Against Method* rev. ed. London: Verso, 1988.

_____. *Farewell to Reason*. London: Verso, 1987.

Frege, Gottlob. On Sense and Meaning". In Brian McGuiness, *Gottlob Frege: Collected Papers*, 1984, pp. 157-177.

Freud, Sigmund. "The Unconscious" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol XIV* (ed. James Strachey). London: The Hogarth Press, 1957, pp 166-204.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays* (transl. Nicholas Walker). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

_____. "Reply to My Critics". In Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift, *The Hermeneutic Tradition: From Ast to Ricoeur*, 1990, pp. 273-297.

_____. *Truth and Method* 2nd rev. edn. (transl. and rev. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald C. Marshall). New York: Continuum Publishing, 1999.

Gass, William H. *Habitations of the Word: Essays*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985.

_____. *Willie Masters' Lonesome Wife*. Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1998.

Gaut, Berys. "The Paradox of Horror". In *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 33, (1993), pp. 333-345.

Genette, Gérard. *Figures of Literary Discourse* (transl. Alan Sheridan). Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982.

Golden, Leon. *Aristotle on Tragic and Comic Mimesis*. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992.

Goodman, Nelson. *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968.

_____. *Of Mind and Other Matters*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984.

_____. *Problems and Projects*. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1972.

_____. "On Starmaking". In Peter J. McCormick, *Starmaking*, 1996, pp. 143-147.

_____. *The Structure of Appearance* 3rd ed. Dordrecht: D Reidel, 1977.

_____. *Ways of Worldmaking*. Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1978.

Goodman, Nelson and Elgin, Katherine Z. *Reconceptions in Philosophy and Other Arts and Sciences*. London: Routledge, 1988.

Grice, Paul. *Studies in the Way of Words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Haack, Susan. "Surprising Noises: Rorty and Hesse on Metaphor". In *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 88, (1987), pp. 171-183.

Halliwell, Stephen. "Aristotelian Mimesis Revisited". In *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 28 (1990), pp. 487-510.

Hanslick, Eduard. *The Beautiful in Music: A Contribution to the Revisal of Musical Aesthetics* (transl. Gustav Cohen). New York: Da Capo Press, 1974.

Harré, Rom and Krausz, Michael. *Varieties of Relativism*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

Harris, James F. *Against Relativism*. La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1992.

Harris, Samela and Kerr, Sheryl Lee. "Ern Malley Official Website". http://www.ernmalley.com/index.html, 3/11/2003.

Hausman, Alan and Wilson, Fred. *Carnap and Goodman: Two Formalists*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967.

Heal, Jane. "Pragmatism and Choosing to Believe". In Alan Malachowski, *Reading Rorty*, 1990, pp. check.

Hesla, David H. "Metaphor in Endgame". In Patrick A. McCarthy, *Critical Essays on Samuel Beckett*, 1986, pp. 173-180.

Hesse, Hermann. *Steppenwolf* (transl. Basil Creighton, rev. Walter Sorell). London: Penguin Books, 1988.

Hesse, Mary. *Models and Analogies in Science*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970.

_____. "Scientific Models". In Warren Shibles, *Essays on Metaphor*, 1972, pp. 169-180.

_____. "Texts Without Types and Lumps Without Laws". In *New Literary History*, XVII, (1985), pp. 31-48.

Hirsch, E. D. Jr. "Meaning and Significance Reinterpreted". In *Critical Inquiry*, 11, (1984), pp. 202-225.

_____. *Validity in Interpretation.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967.

Holland, Norman N. *5 Readers Reading.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975.

Hookway, Christopher. *Peirce.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985.

Horace. "On the Art of Poetry" (transl. T. S. Dorsch). In T. S. Dorsch, *Classical Literary Criticism*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965.

Hume, David. *Essays: Moral, Political and Literary* vol. 1. London: Longmans, Green, 1898.

Hume, Kathryn. *Fantasy and Mimesis: Responses to Reality in Western Literature.* New York: Methuen, 1984.

Ingarden, Roman. *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art* (transl. Ruth Ann Crowley and Kenneth R. Olson). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973.

_____. *The Literary Work of Art: An Investigation on the Borderlines of Ontology, Logic, and Theory of Literature, with an Appendix on the Functions of Language in the Theater* (transl. George G. Grabowicz). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973.

_____. "A Marginal Commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics.*" In *Selected Papers in Aesthetics*, pp. 45-78.

_____. "On So-Called Truth in Literature." In Peter J. McCormick, *Selected Papers in Aesthetics*, 1985, pp. 133-162.

Iseminger, Gary (ed.). *Intention and Interpretation.* Philadelphia, NY: Temple University Press, 1992.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.

_____. *Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology.* Baltimore, OH: John Hopkins University Press, 1989.

Jakobson, Roman. "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics". In Thomas Sebeok, *Style in Language*, 1960, pp. 350-377.

James, Henry. *The Turn of the Screw and Other Short Novels.* New York: Signet, 1995.

James, William. *Pragmatism: A New Name for some Old Ways of Thinking together with Four Related Essays Selected from The Meaning of Truth.* New York: Longmans, Green, 1946.

Jauss, Hans Robert. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (transl. Timothy Bahti). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

Jones, Ann Rosalind. "Mills and Boon Meets Feminism". In Jean Radford, *The Progress of Romance*, 1986, pp. 195-218.

Jordan, Penny. *Woman to Wed?* Sydney: Harlequin Mills and Boon, 1996.

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Judgment* (transl. James Creed Meredith). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952.

_____*Critique of Pure Reason* (transl. Norman Kemp Smith). London: Macmillan, 1990.

Kott, Jan. *Shakespeare: Our Contemporary* (transl. Boleslaw Taborski). London: Methuen, 1964.

Knapp, Steven and Michaels, Walter Benn. "The Impossibility of Intentionless Meaning". In Gary Iseminger, *Intention and Interpretation,* 1992, pp. 51-64

Knight, Deborah. "Selves, Interpreters, Narrators". In Philosophy and Literature, 18, (1994), pp. 274-286.

Kripke, Saul A. *Naming and Necessity.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980.

Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* 2nd ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1970.

Lamarque, Peter. "The Death of the Author: An Analytic Autopsy". In *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 30, (1990), pp. 319-331.

_____. *Fictional Points of View.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996.

_____ (ed.). *Philosophy and Fiction: Essays in Literary Aesthetics.* Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1983.

Lamarque, Peter and Olsen, Stein Haugom (eds). *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art - The Analytic Tradition: An Anthology. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.*

_____. *Truth, Fiction, and Literature: A Philosophical Perspective.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.

Langer, Susanne K. *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951.

Le Poidevin, Robin. "Worlds within Worlds? The Paradoxes of Embedded Fiction". In *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 35, (1995), pp. 227-238.

Lewis, Clarence Irving. *Mind and the World Order: Outline of a Theory of Knowledge.* New York: Dover, 1929.

Lewis, David. *Counterfactuals.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973.

_____. *On the Plurality of Worlds.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.

_____. *Philosophical Papers* vol. 1. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.

_____. Postscripts to "Truth in Fiction". In *Philosophical Papers* vol. 1, 1983, pp. 276-280.

_____. "Truth in Fiction". In *Philosophical Papers* vol. 1, 1983, pp. 260-275.

Livingston, Paisley. "Nested Art". The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, 61, (2003), pp. 233-245.

Litz, A. Walton. "'A Development of Self': Character and Personality in Jane Austen's Fiction". In Juliet McMaster, *Jane Austen's Achievement,* 1976, pp. 64-78.

Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (ed. Roger Woolhouse). London: Penguin, 1997.

Lodge, David (ed.). *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader.* London: Longman, 1988.

Longinus (attrib.). "On the Sublime" (transl. T. S. Dorsch). In T. S. Dorsch *Classical Literary Criticism*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965.

Lorand, Ruth. "Telling a Story or Telling a World?" In *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 41, (2001), pp. 425-443.

Loux, Michael J. (ed.). *The Possible and the Actual: Readings in the Metaphysics of Modality.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979.

Lycos, Kimon. "Making Things with Words: Plato on Mimesis in Republic". In *Philosophical Inquiry*, XVIII, 1996, pp. 1-19.

McCarthy, Patrick A. *Critical Essays on Samuel Beckett*, Boston, MA:G. K. Hall, 1986.

McCormick, Peter J. (ed.). *Selected Papers in Aesthetics.* Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1985.

_____. *Starmaking; Realism, Anti-Realism, and Irrealism.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996.

McGonigal, Andrew. "Metaphor, Indeterminacy, and Intention". In *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 42, (2002), pp. 179-190.

McGuiness, Brian. *Gottlob Frege: Collected Papers on Mathematics, Logic and Philosophy.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984.

McMaster, Juliet (ed.). *Jane Austen's Achievement: Papers Delivered at the Jane Austen Bicentennial Conference at the University of Alberta.* London: Macmillan Press, 1976.

Malachowski, Alan R. (ed.). *Reading Rorty: Critical Responses to Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (and Beyond).* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990.

Malinowski, Bronislaw. "The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages". In C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning*, 1956, pp. 296-336.

Malpas, Jeff, Arnswald, Ulrich and Kertscher, Jens. *Gadamer's Century: Essays in Honour of Hans-Georg Gadamer.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002.

Margolis, Joseph. *Art and Philosophy.* Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980.

_____. "Farewell to Danto and Goodman". In *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 38, (1998), pp. 353-374.

_____. *The Truth About Relativism.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

Martin J. and Harré R. "Metaphor in Science". In David Miall, *Metaphors: Problems and Perspectives*, 1982, pp. 89-105.

Matarasso, P. M. (transl.). *The Quest of the Holy Grail.* London: Penguin, 1969.

Maudlin, Tim. "On the Impossibility of David Lewis' Modal Realism". In *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, 74, (1996), pp. 669-682.

Mescin, Aaron and Weinberg, Jonathan M. "Emotions, Fiction, and Cognitive Architecture". In *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 43, (2003), pp. 17-34.

Miall, David (ed.). *Metaphors: Problems and Perspectives.* Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1982.

J. S. Mill, J. S. and Bentham, Jeremy (ed. Alan Ryan), *Utilitarianism and Other Essays*, London: Penguin, 1987.

Modleski, Tania. *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass produced Fantasies for Women.* London: Routledge, 1990.

Mooij, J. J. A. *A Study of Metaphor: On the Nature of Metaphorical Expressions, with Special Reference to Their Reference.* Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing, 1976.

Morton, Adam. "Suppose, Suppose". In *Analysis*, 53, (1993), pp. 61-64.

New, Christopher. "Walton on Imagination, Belief and Fiction". In *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 36, (1996), pp. 159-165.

Newell, R. W. *Objectivity, Empiricism and Truth.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* (transl. R. J. Hollingdale). Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973.

_____. *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* (transl. Shaun Whiteside, ed. Michael Tanner). London: Penguin Books, 1993.

_____. "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense". In Daniel Breazeale *Philosophy and Truth*, 1979, pp. 79-100.

Norris, Christopher. *Truth and the Ethics of Criticism.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994.

Novitz, David. "The Trouble with Truth". In *Philosophy and Literature*, 19, (1995), pp. 350-359.

Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* rev. ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

_____. *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Nyenhuis, Gerald. "Roman Ingarden's Contribution to the Reading and Analysis of the Literary Text". In Hans H. Rudnick (ed.), *Ingardeniana II*, 1990, pp. 95-105.

Ogden, C. K. and Richards, I. A. *The Meaning of Meaning.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956.

Olsen, Stein Haugon. "The 'Meaning of a literary Work". In Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art - The Analytic Tradition: An Anthology,* 2004, pp. 177-188.

Ormiston, Gayle L. and Schrift Alan D. (eds). *The Hermeneutic Tradition: From Ast to Ricoeur.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990.

Ortony, Andrew (ed.). *Metaphor and Thought, 2nd edn.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Pavel, Thomas G. *Fictional Worlds.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Phelan, James. *Worlds from Words: A Theory of Language in Fiction.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Pilling, John (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Beckett,.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Pinion, F. B. *A Jane Austen Companion: A Critical Survey and Reference Book.* London: The MacMillan Press, 1976.

Plato. *Ion* (transl. B. Jowett). New York: Random House, 1937.

_____. *The Republic* (transl. Desmond Lee). London: Penguin Books, 1987.

_____. *Theaetetus* (transl. Robin A. H. Waterfield). London: Penguin Books, 1987.

Priest, Graham. *Beyond the Limits of Thought.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

_____. *In Contradiction: A Study of the Transconsistent.* Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987.

_____. *An Introduction to Non-Classical Logic.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Priest Graham and Routley, Richard. "The Philosophical Significance and Inevitability of Paraconsistency". In Graham Priest, Richard Routley and Jean Norman (eds) *Paraconsistent Logic: Essays on the Inconsistent*, 1989, pp. 483-538.

Priest, Graham, Routley, Richard and Norman, Jean (eds). *Paraconsistent Logic: Essays on the Inconsistent.* Munich: Philosophia Verlag, 1989.

Propp, Vladimir. *Morphology of the Folktale,* 2nd ed. (transl. Laurence Scott rev. Louis A. Wagner). Austen, TX: University of Texas Press, 1975.

_____. *Theory and History of Folklore* (ed. Anatoly Liberman, transl. Adriana Y. Martin and Richard P. Martin et al). Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984.

Putnam, Hilary. *The Many Faces of Realism.* La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1987.

_____. "Reflections on Goodman's Ways of Worldmaking". In *The Journal of Philosophy*, LXXVI, (1979), pp. 603-618.

Quine, W. V. O. *Word and Object.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960.

Rabinowitz, Peter J. "The Turn of the Glass Key: Popular Fiction as Reading Strategy". In *Critical Inquiry*, 11, (1985), pp. 418-431.

Radford, Colin. 'How can we be Moved by the Fate of Anna Karenina". In Peter Lamarque, *Philosophy and Fiction*, 1983, pp. 300-306.

Radford, Jean (ed.). *The Progress of Romance: The Politics of Popular Fiction.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986.

Radstone, Susannah (ed.). *Sweet Dreams: Sexuality Gender and Popular Fiction.* London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1988.

Radway, Janice A. *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature.* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1984.

_____. "Women Read the Romance: The Interaction of Text and Context". In *Feminist Studies*, 9, (1983), pp. 53-78.

Reddy, Michael J. "The Conduit Metaphor: A Case of Frame Conflict in our Language about Language". In Andrew Ortony, *Metaphor and Thought*, 1993, pp. 164-201.

Richards, I. A. *The Philosophy of Rhetoric.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965.

Ricoeur, Paul. *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics* (ed. Don Ihde). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974.

_____. *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation* (transl. John B. Thompson). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

_____. *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning.* Fort Worth, TX: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976.

_____. *The Rule of Metaphor: Multidisciplinary Studies in the Creation of Meaning in Language* (transl. Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977.

_____. "Word, Polysemy, Metaphor: Creativity in Language". In Mario J. Valdés (ed.), *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*, 1991, pp. 65-85.

Roberts, Thomas J. *An Aesthetics of Junk Fiction.* Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1990.

Robinson, Michael. "Belacqua". In Patrick A. McCarthy, *Critical Essays on Samuel Beckett*, 1986, pp. 30-36.

Rorty, Amelie Oksenberg (ed.). *Essays on Aristotle's Poetics.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Rorty, Richard. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979.

Rosebury, Brian. "Irrecoverable Intentions and Literary Interpretation". In *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 37, 1997, pp. 15-30.

Rudnick, Hans H. (ed.). *Ingardeniana II: New Studies in the Philosophy of Roman Ingarden, with a New International Ingarden Bibliography.* Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990.

Ryan, Alan (ed.). *Utilitarianism and Other Essays.* London: Penguin, 1987.

Säätelä, Simo. "Fiction, Make-Believe and Quasi Emotions". In *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 34, (1994), pp. 25-34.

Sacks, Sheldon (ed.). *On Metaphor.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Imagination: A Psychological Critique* (transl. Forest Williams). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1962.

_____. *The Psychology of Imagination* (transl. Mary Warnock). London: Methuen, 1972.

Scheffler, Israel. "Epistemology of Objectivity". In Peter J. McCormick, *Starmaking*, 1996, pp. 29-58.

_____. "The Wonderful Worlds of Goodman". In Peter J. McCormick, *Starmaking*, 1996, pp. 133-141.

Schier, Flint. 'Tragedy and the Community of Sentiment". In Peter Lamarque, *Philosophy and Fiction*, 1983, pp. 73-92.

Schiller, Friedrich. *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (transl. Reginald Snell). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1954.

Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts* (ed. Heinze Kimmerle, transl. James Duke and Jack Forstman). Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977.

Scruton, Roger. *Art and Imagination: A Study in the Philosophy of Mind.* London: Methuen and Co Ltd, 1974.

Searle, John. "The Logical Status of Fictional Discourse". In Peter Lamarque, *Philosophy and Fiction*, 1983, pp. 320-327.

_____. "Metaphor". In Andrew Ortony, *Metaphor and Thought*, 1993, pp. 83-111.

Sebeok, Thomas. (ed.). *Style in Language.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960.

Shakespeare, William. *The Complete Works* (ed. Peter Alexander). London: The Reprint Society, 1951.

Shaw, Bernard. *Saint Joan: A Chronicle Play in Six Scenes and an Epilogue.* London: Penguin, 1946.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe. *A Defence of Poetry.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1921.

Sheppard, E. A. *Henry James and The Turn of the Screw.* Aukland: Aukland University Press, 1974.

Shibles, Warren (ed.). *Essays on Metaphor.* Whitewater, WI: The Language Press, 1972.

Shumway, David R. "Romance in the Romance: Love and Marriage in Turn-of-the-Century Best Sellers". In *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, 29, (1999), pp. 43-55.

Shusterman, Richard (ed.). *Analytic Aesthetics.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989.

Sidney, Philip. *A Defence of Poetry* (ed. J. A. Van Dorsten). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Singer, Jerome L. *Daydreaming and Fantasy.* London: George Allen and Unwin, 1976.

Siegel, Eli. *James and the Children: A Consideration of Henry James's The Turn of the Screw.* New York: Definition Press, 1968.

Southam, B. C. *Jane Austen: Sense and Sensibility, Pride and Prejudice and Mansfield Park: A Casebook.* London: Macmillan Press, 1976.

Stalnaker, Robert C. *Inquiry.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984.

_____. "Possible Worlds". In Michael J. Loux, *The Possible and the Actual*, 1979, pp. 225-234.

Stevenson, Leslie. "Twelve Conceptions of Imagination". In *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 43, (2003), pp. 238-259.

Stolnitz, Jerome. "On the Cognitive Triviality of Art." In Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen (eds), *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art - The Analytic Tradition: An Anthology. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004*, pp. 337-343.

Suits, David B. "Fictional Characters are Just Like Us". In *Philosophy and Literature*, 19, (1995), pp. 105-108.

Szczepańska, Anita. "The Structure of Artworks". In Bohdan Dziemidok, and Peter McCormick, *On the Aesthetics of Roman Ingarden: Interpretations and Assessments*, 1989, pp. 21-54.

Tanner, Tony. *Jane Austen.* Houndmills: Macmillan Education, 1986.

Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Thomasson, Amie L. *Fiction and Metaphysics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

_____. "Fictional Characters and Literary Practices". In *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 43, (2003), pp. 138-157.

Thurber, James. "The Macbeth Murder Mystery". In James Thurber, *The Thurber Carnival*, New York: Harper and Row, 1945, pp. 60-63.

Tolstoy, Leo. *What is Art?* (transl. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky). London: Penguin Books, 1995.

Treacher, Amal. "What is Life Without my Love? Desire and Romantic Fiction", In Susannah Radstone, *Sweet Dreams*, 1988, pp. 73-90.

Valdés Mario J. (ed.). *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*, New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991.

van Fraassen, Bas C. *The Empirical Stance.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002.

Vico, Giambattista. *New Science: Principles of the New Science Concerning the Common Nature of Nations, Third Edition Thoroughly Corrected, Revised, and Expanded by the Author* (transl. David Marsh). London: Penguin Books, 1999.

Walton, Kendall L. "Categories of Art". In Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen, *Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art - The Analytic Tradition: An Anthology,* 2004, pp. 142-157.

_____. "Depiction, Perception, and Imagination: Responses to Richard Wollheim". In *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 60, (2002), pp. 26-35.

_____. *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990.

Warnke, Georgia. *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition and Reason.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987.

Warnock, Mary. *Imagination.* London: Faber and Faber, 1976.

Watson, Daphne. *Their Own Worst Enemies: Women Writers of Women's Fiction.* London: Pluto Press, 1995.

White, Alan R. *The Language of Imagination.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990.

Whorf, Benjamin Lee. *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf* (ed. John B. Carroll). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1956.

Whyte, J. T. "Success Semantics". In *Analysis*, 50, (1990), pp. 149-157.

Williams, Jeff. "Narrative Games: The Frame of *The Turn of the Screw*". In *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, 28, (1998), pp. 43-55.

Wimsatt, W. K. and Beardsley, Monroe C. "The Intentional Fallacy". In W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry.* Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1954.

Winegar, L. T. and Valsiner, J. (eds). *Children's Development within Social Contexts: Metatheoretical, Theoretical and Methodological Issues.* Erlbaum, 1992.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *On Certainty* (transl. Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe). Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969.

_____. *Philosophical Investigations* (transl. G. E. M. Anscombe). Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1997.

_____. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (transl. C. K. Ogden). London: Routledge, 1981.

Wollheim, Richard. *Art and Its Objects 2nd ed. With Six Supplementary Essays.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Works and Worlds of Art.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

Worth, Sarah E. "Aristotle, Thought, and Mimesis: Our Responses to Fiction". In *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 58, (2000), pp. 333-339.

Worton, Michael "*Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*: Theatre as Text". In John Pilling, *The Cambridge Companion to Beckett*, 1994, pp. 67-87.

Yanal, Robert J. "The Paradox of Suspense". In *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 36, (1996), pp. 146-158.

Zemach, Eddy M. "Emotion and Fictional Beings". In *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 54, (1996), pp. 41-48.

_____. "Tom Sawyer and the Beige Unicorn". In *The British Journal of Aesthetics*, 38, (1998), pp. 167-179.

Part 2: Art Works Mentioned in the Text

Following is a list of works of art mentioned in the course of the argument.

Aeschylus. *The Oresteia,* 458BC.

Aesop's Fables. n. d.

Arnold, Matthew. *Sohrab and Rustum,* 1853.

Austen, Jane. *Emma,* 1816.

_____. *Northanger Abbey,* 1818.

_____. *Pride and Prejudice,* 1813.

Balzac, Honoré de. *Sarrasine,* 1830.

Bataille, Georges. *Le Bleu du Ciel,* 1957.

Baum, L. Frank. *The Wizard of Oz,* 1900.

Beckett, Samuel. *Endgame,* 1958.

_____. *Waiting for Godot,* 1956.

Botticelli, Sandro. *The Birth of Venus*, Uffizi Gallery, Florence, c1484

_____. *Virgin with Child with the Infant St. John and two Angels,* Accademia Gallery, Florence, c1468.

Caesar, Julius. *Gallic Wars,* 58-50BC.

Carey, Peter. *The True History of the Kelly Gang,* 2000.

Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,* 1865.

_____. *Jabberwocky,* 1872.

Cinderella. n. d.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,* 1798.

Constable. *The Hay Wain,* National Gallery, London, 1821.

Dante Alighieri. *The Divine Comedy,* c1320.

Darcy, Emma. *The Father of her Child*, 1996

Doyle, Conan. *The Sherlock Holmes Stories,* 1887-1927.

Duchamp, Marcel. *Fountain,* Original Lost, 1917.

The Epic of Gilgamesh. n. d.

Flaubert, Gustave. *Madame Bovary,* 1856.

Gass, William, H. *Willie Masters' Lonesome Wife,* 1968.

Graham, Kenneth. *The Wind in the Willows,* 1908.

Hemingway, Ernest. *The Old Man and the Sea,* 1952.

Herbert, Frank. *Dune,* 1965.

Hesse, Hermann. *Steppenwolf,* 1927.

James, Henry. *The Turn of the Screw,* 1908.

Jordan, Penny. *Woman to Wed?* 1996.

Kafka, Franz. *Metamorphosis,* 1915.

Keats, John. *La Belle Dame sans Merci,* 1820.

Kingsley, Charles. *The Water-Babies: A Fairy Tale for a Land-Baby,* 1915.

Lamb, Charles and Lamb, Mary. *Tales from Shakespeare,* 1807.

Lawrence, D. H. *Piano,* 1911.

Leoncavallo, Ruggiero. *I Pagliacci,* 1892.

Lippi, Filippino. *Madonna with Child and Saints,* Uffizi Gallery, Florence, 1486.

Malley, Ern. *Poems,* 1942.

Manet, Eduard. *Le Déjeuner sur L'Herbe,* Musée D'Orsay, Paris, 1863.

_____. *Olympia,* Musée D'Orsay, Paris, 1863.

Miller, Arthur. *The Crucible,* 1952.

Monteverdi. Claudio. *The Coronation of Poppeia,* 1642.

Nabakov, Vladimir. *Lolita,* 1955.

O'Brien, Flann. *At Swim-Two-Birds,* 1939.

Offenbach, Jacques. *Orpheus in the Underworld,* 1858.

Picasso, Pablo. *Weeping Woman,* Penrose Collection, London, 1937.

The Princess and the Pea. n. d.

The Quest of the Holy Grail (ed. Pauline Matarasso), c1225.

Rubens, Peter Paul. *Self-Portrait,* National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1622.

Schubert, Franz. *Winterreisse: Le Voyage d'Hiver,* 1828.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet Prince of Denmark,* c1600.

_____. *Julius Caesar,* c1599.

_____. *King Lear,* c1605.

_____. *Macbeth,* c1605.

_____. *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* c1595.

_____. *Othello, The Moor of Venice*, c1605

_____. *Romeo and Juliet,* c1595.

_____. *The Tempest,* c1612.

_____. *Troilus and Cressida,* c1605

Shaw, Bernard. *Saint Joan*, 1923.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus,* 1818.

Sophocles. *Antigone*, 441BC.

_____. *Oedipus Rex,* c425BC.

Tate, Nahum. *The History of King Lear Adapted by Nahum Tate,* 1681.

Thurber, James. *The Macbeth Murder Mystery,* 1931.

Titian. *The Venus of Urbino,* Uffizi Gallery, Florence, 1538.

Tolkein, J. R. R. *The Lord of the Rings,* 1954-55.

Tolstoy, Leo. *Anna Karenina,* 1877.

_____. *War and Peace,* 1869.

Van Gogh, Vincent. *Sunflowers*, Van Gogh Musuem, Amsterdam, 1889.

Walt Disney Studios. *Bambi,* 1942.

Wells, H. G. *The Time Machine,* 1895.

Wordsworth, William. *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud,* 1807.